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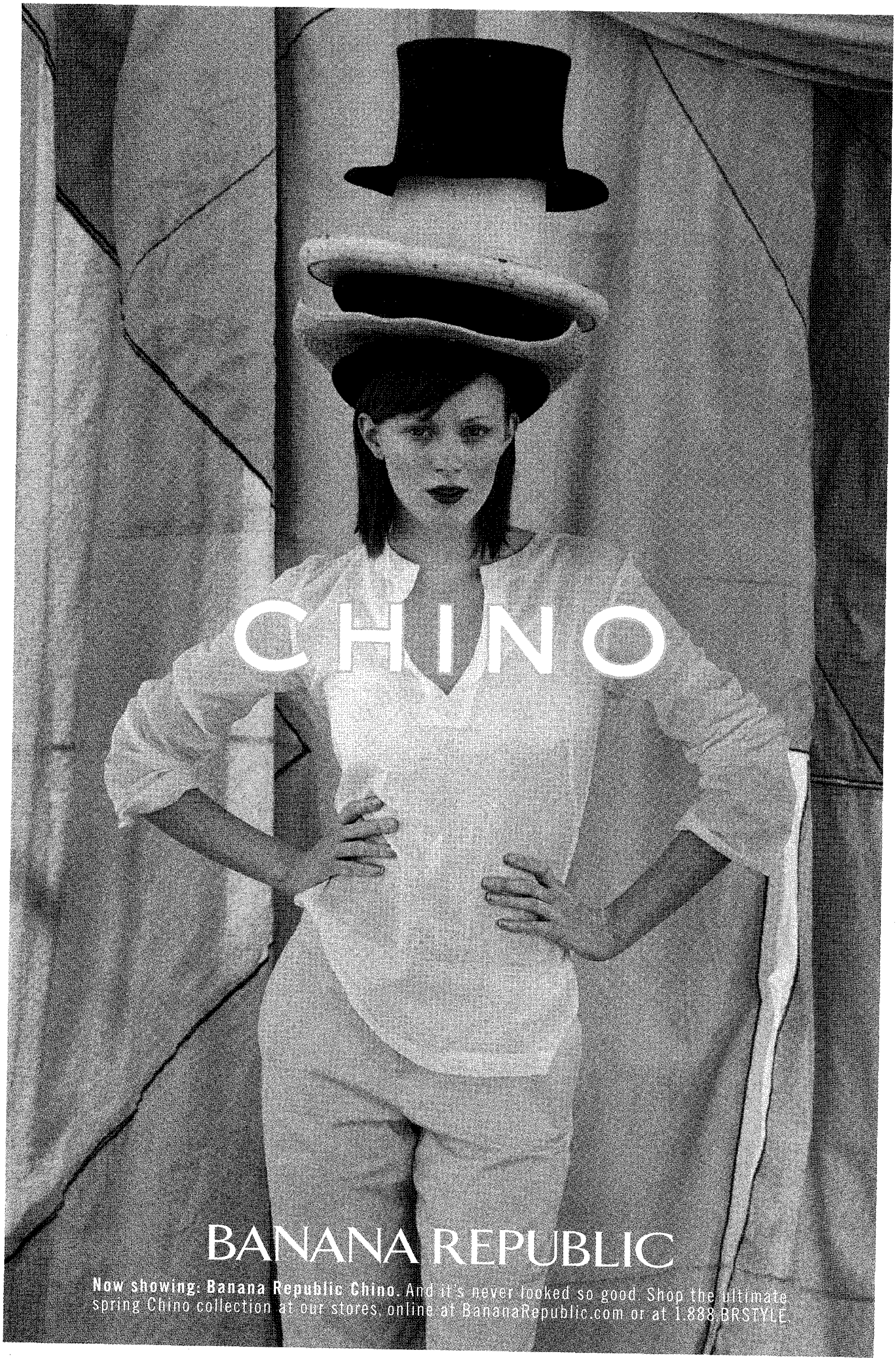
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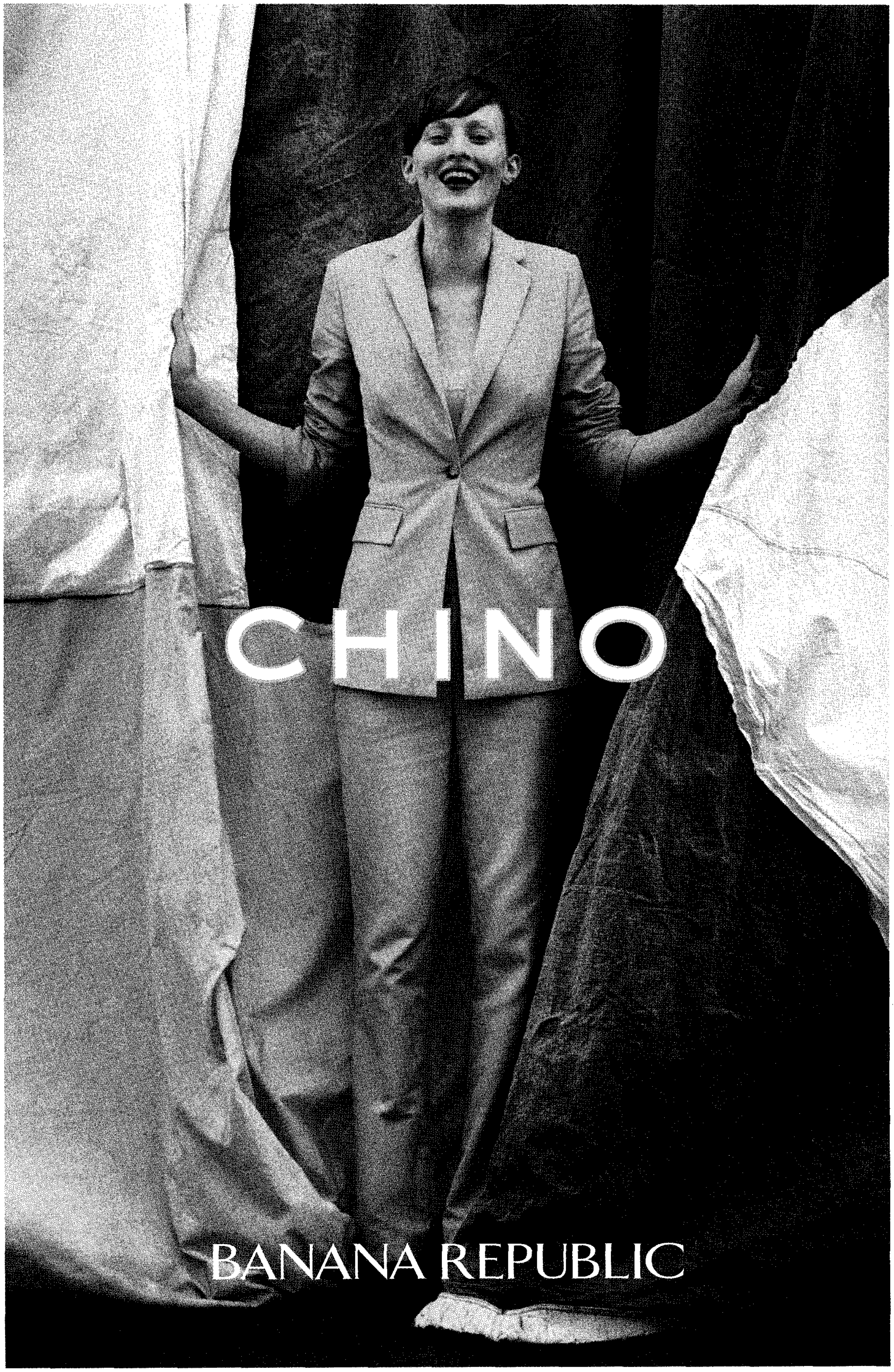
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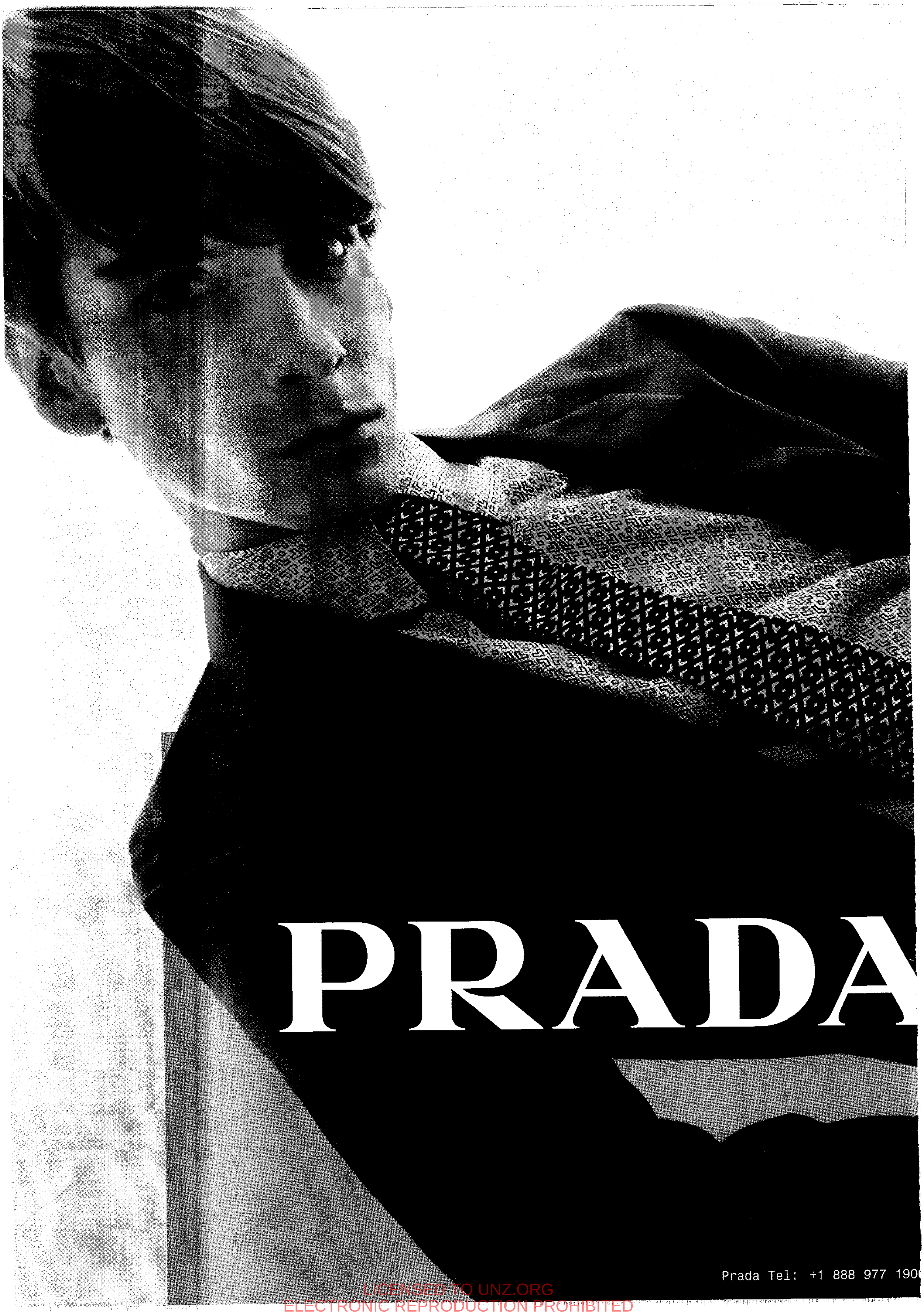
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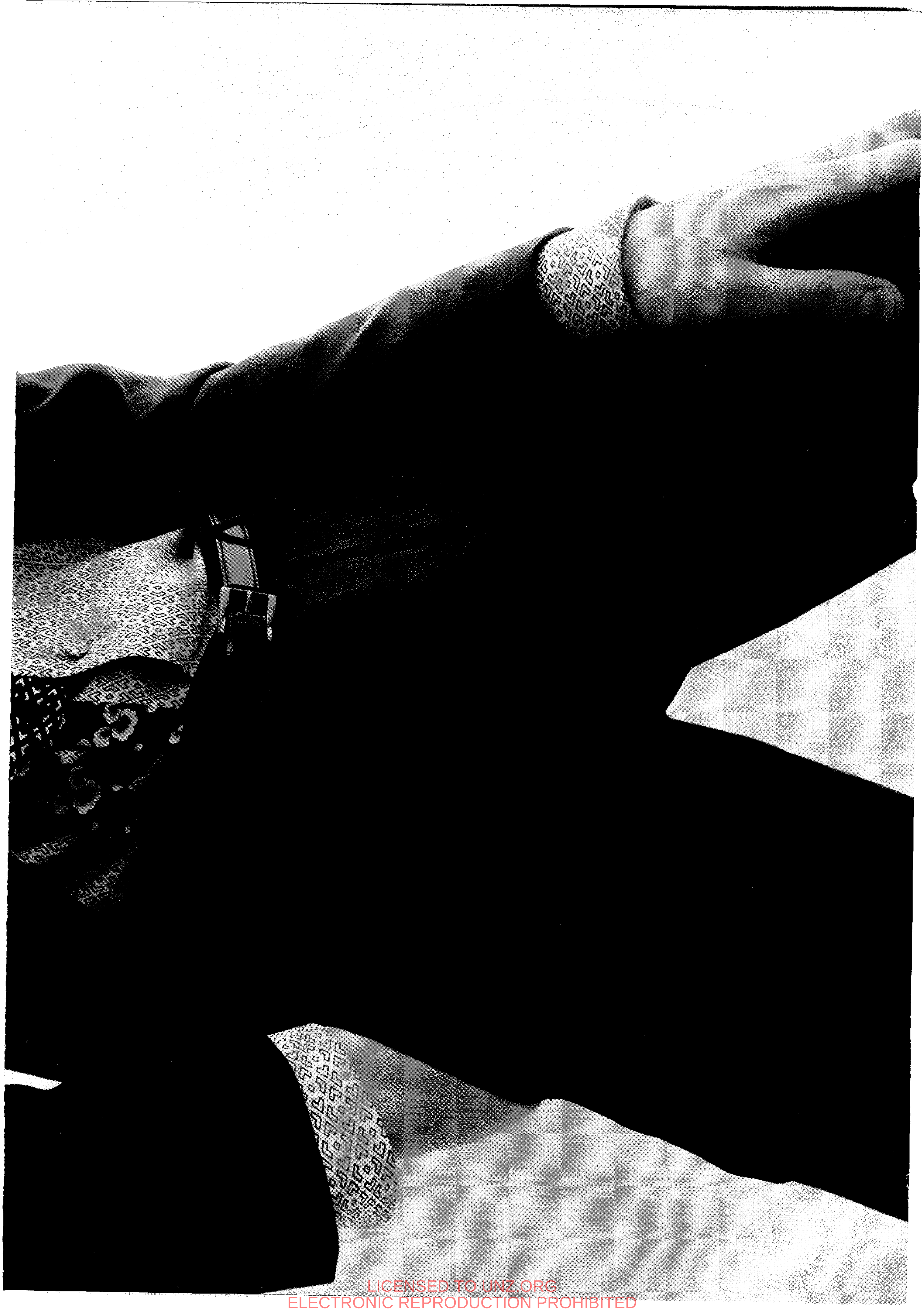

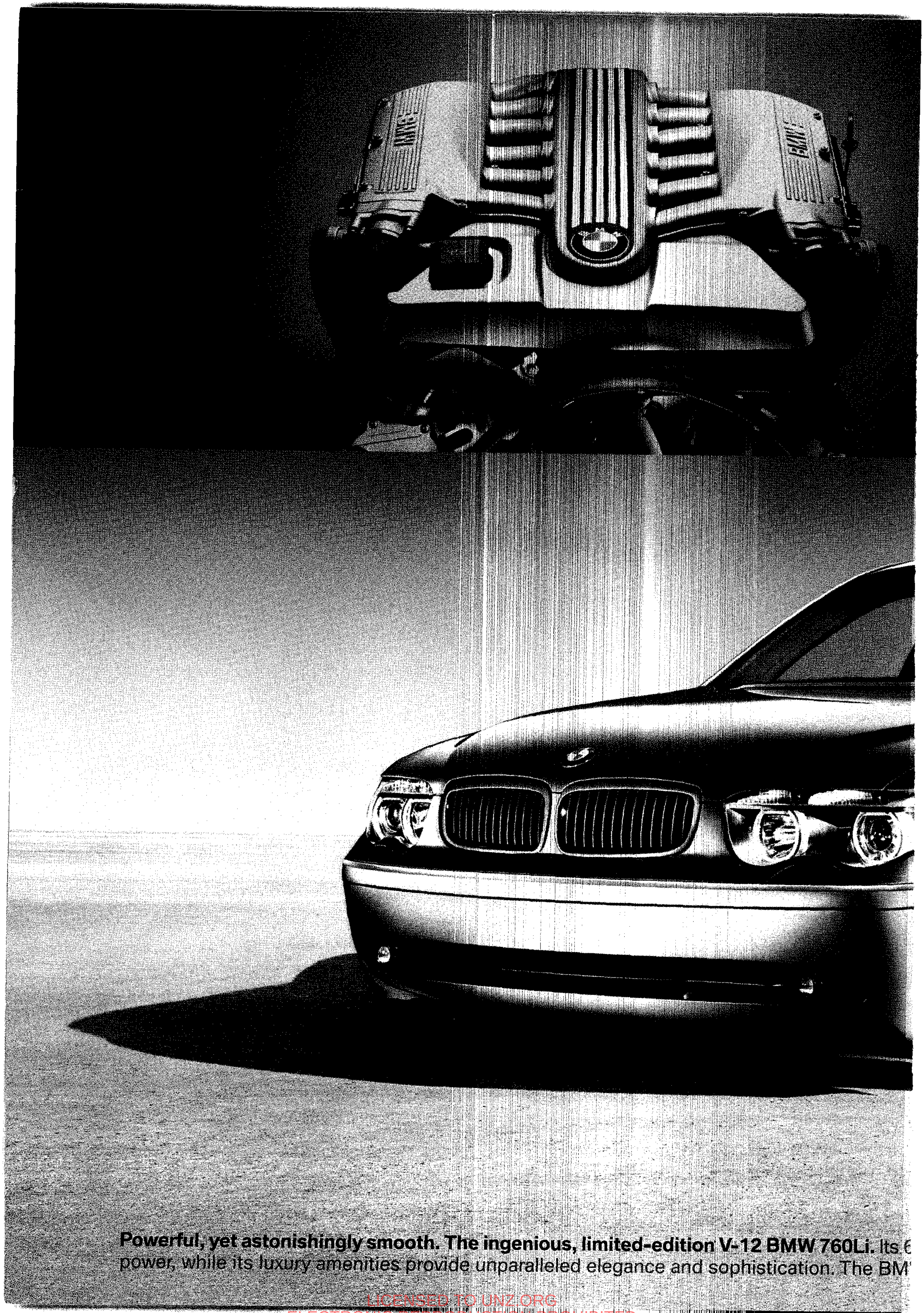

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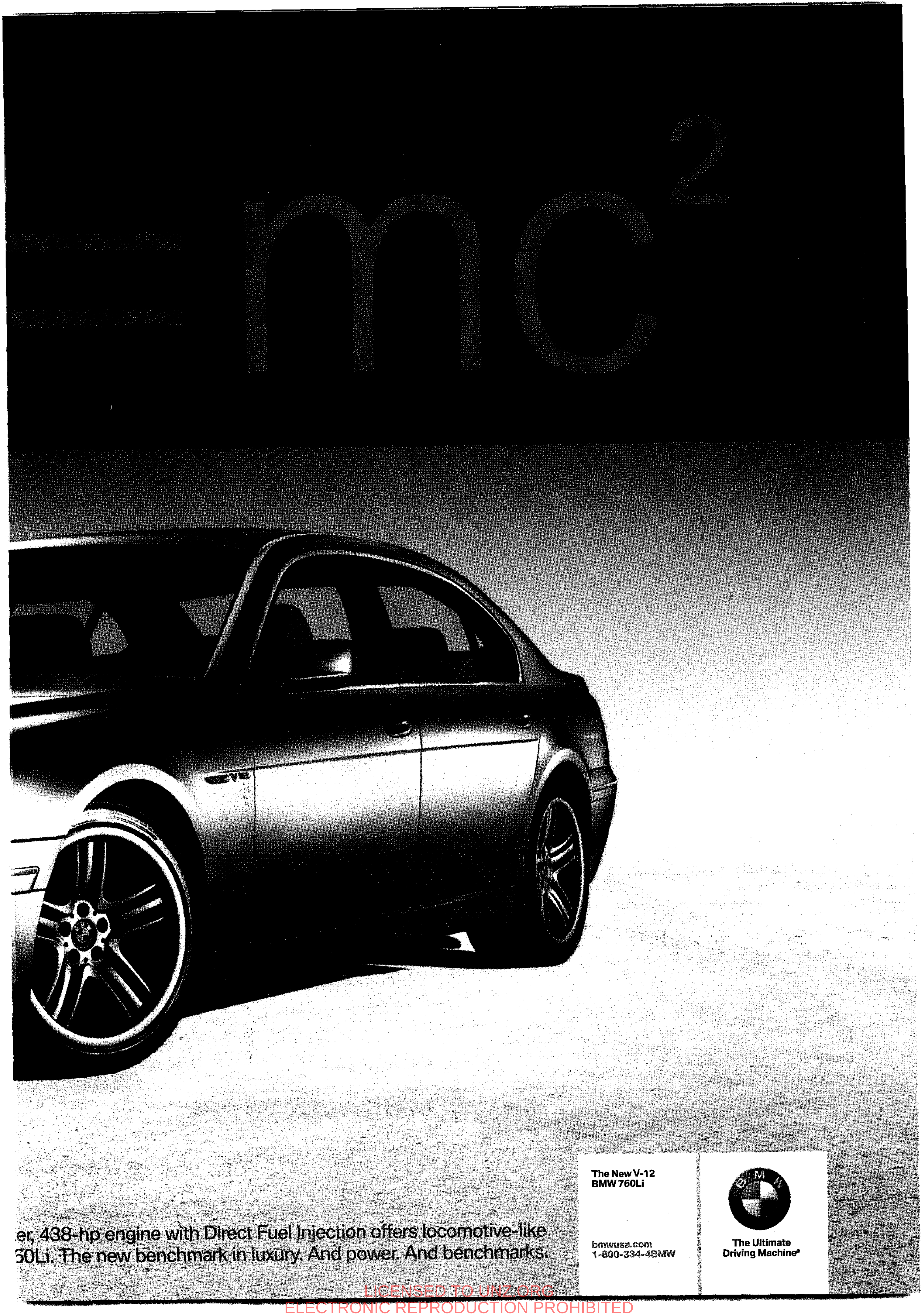

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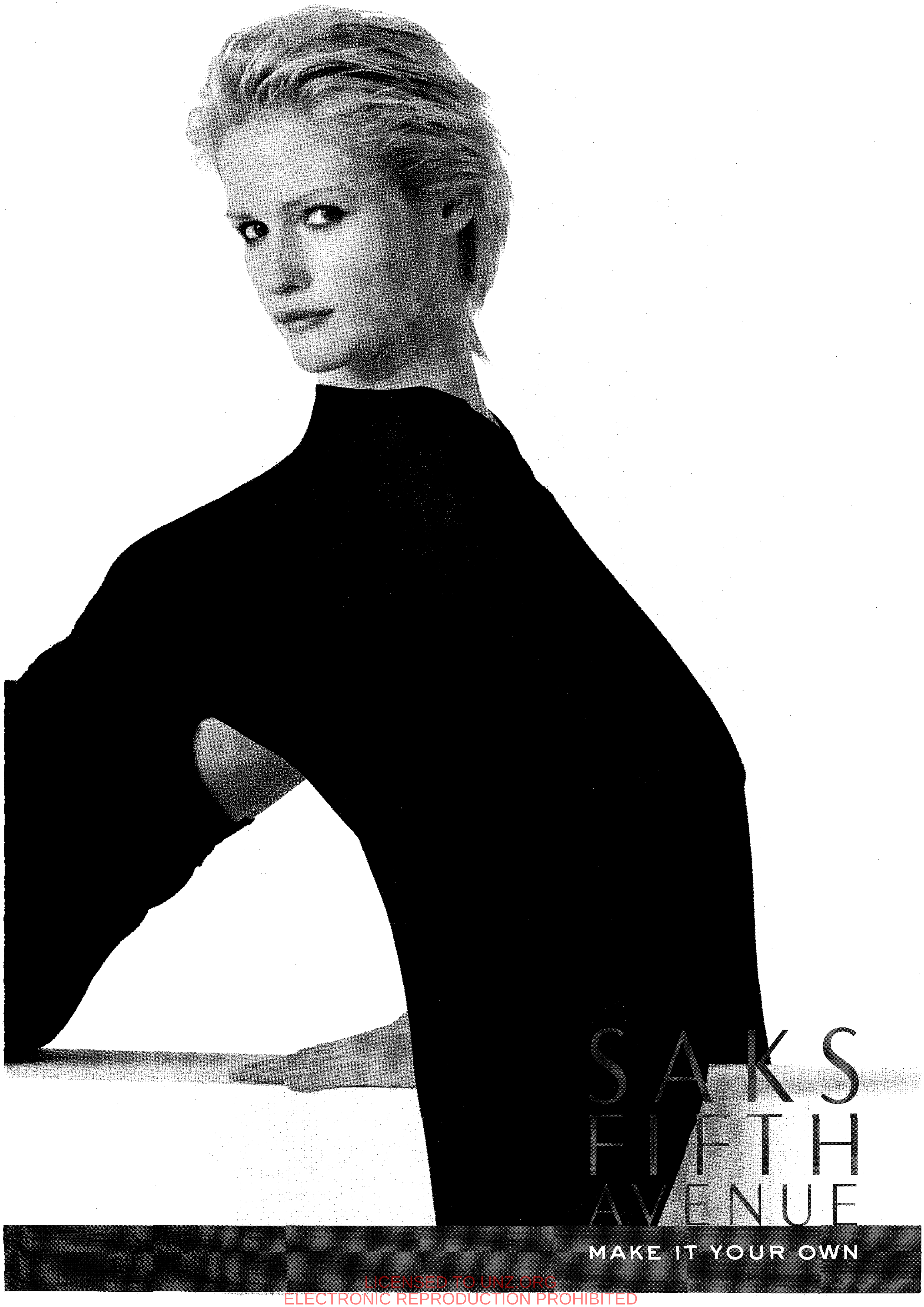
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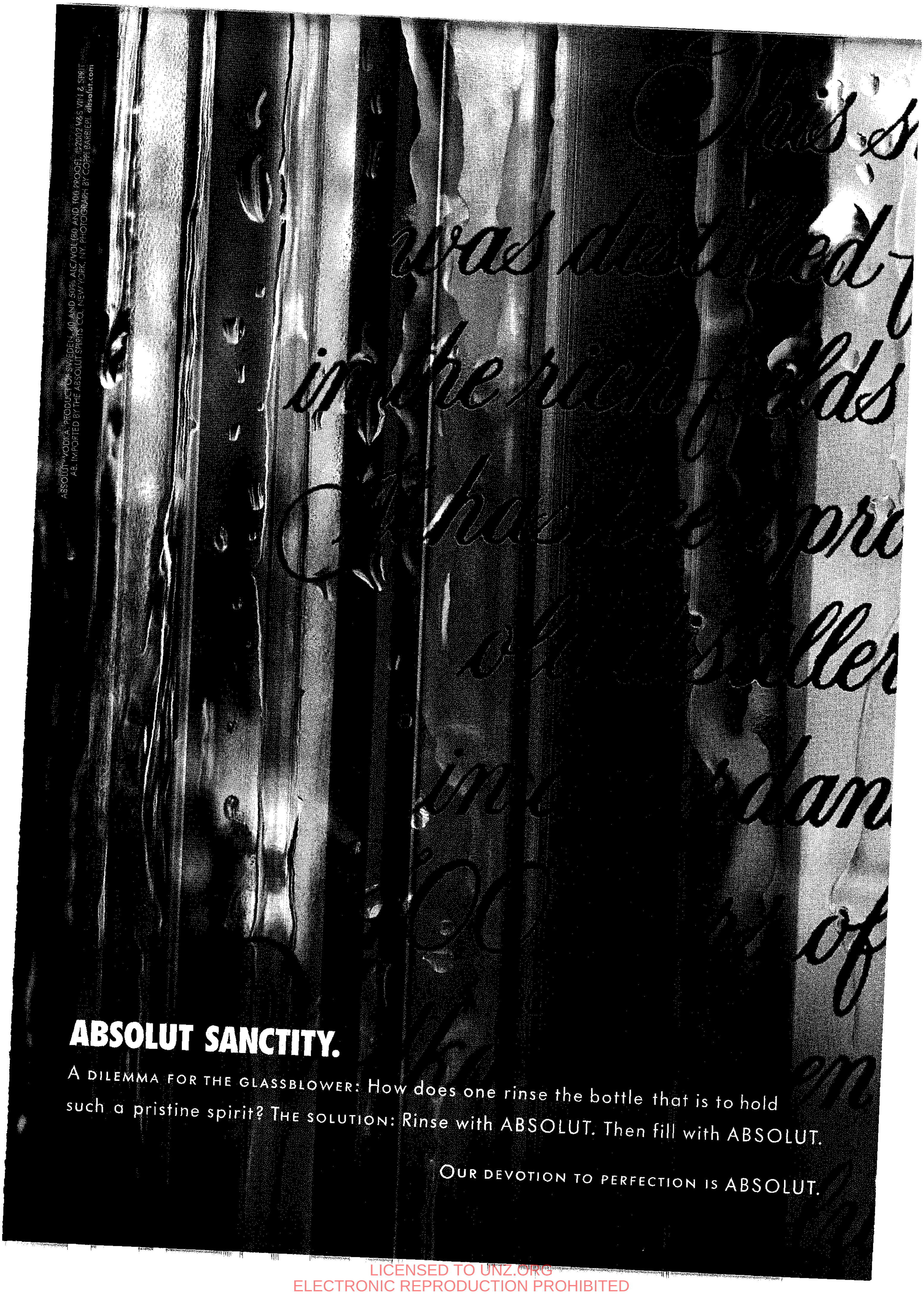

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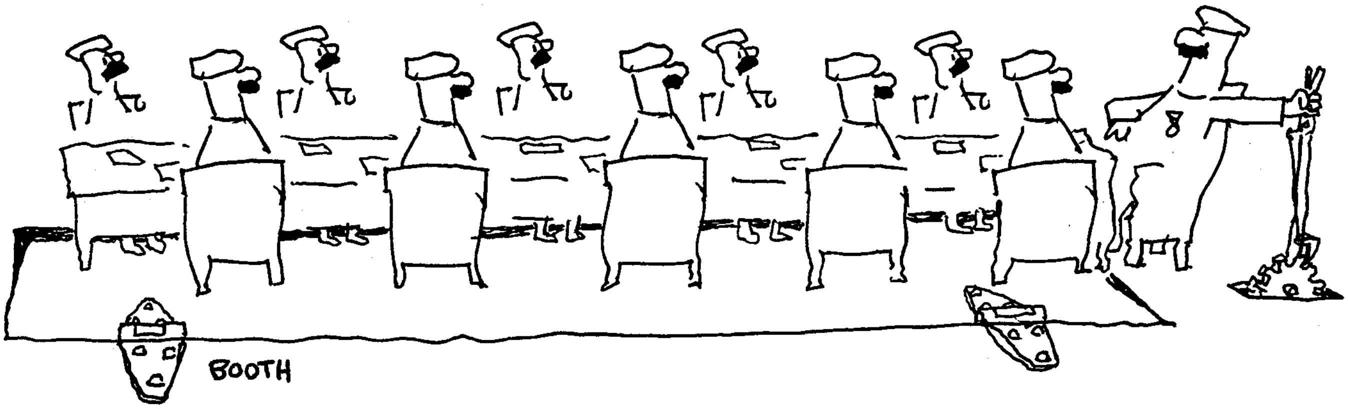

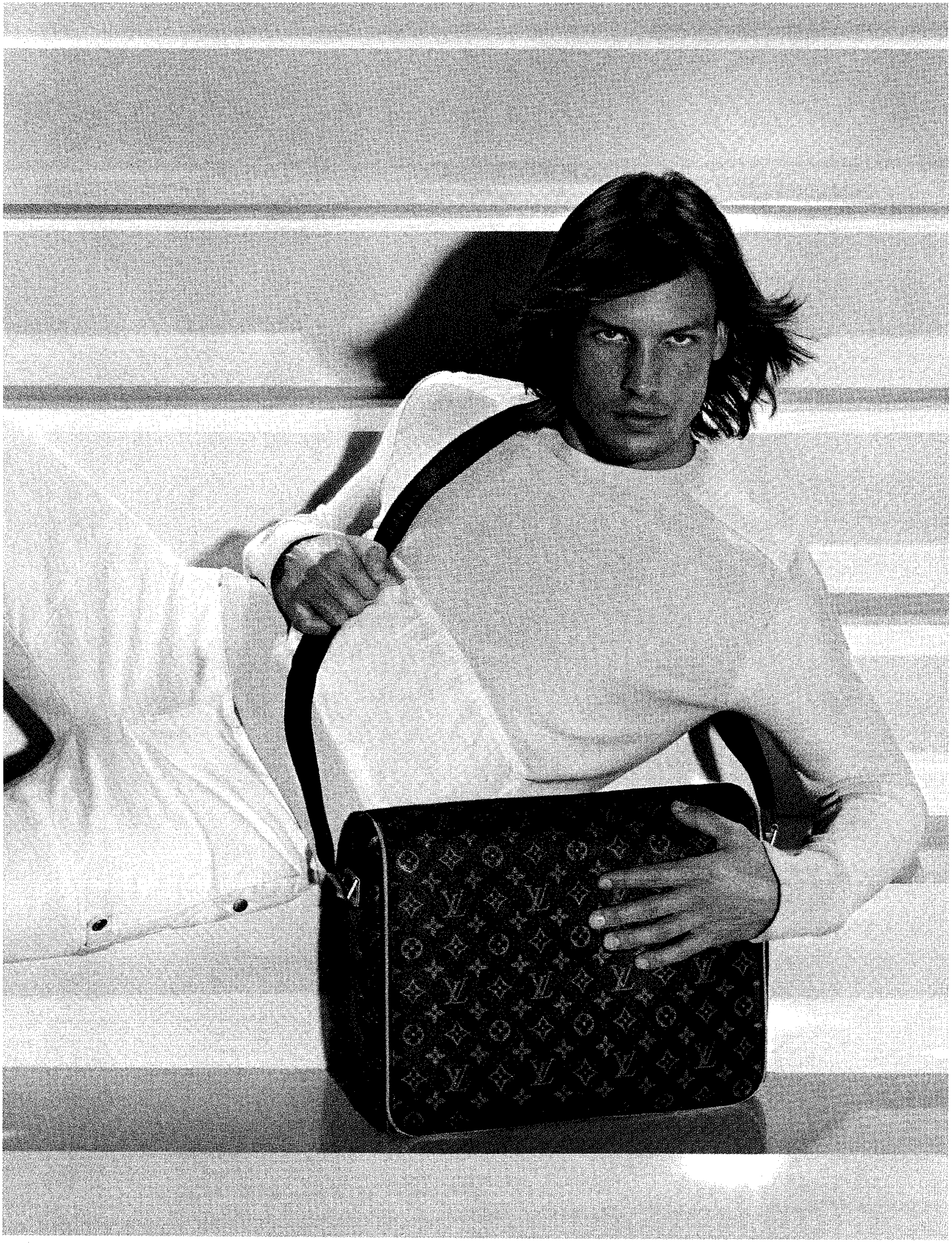

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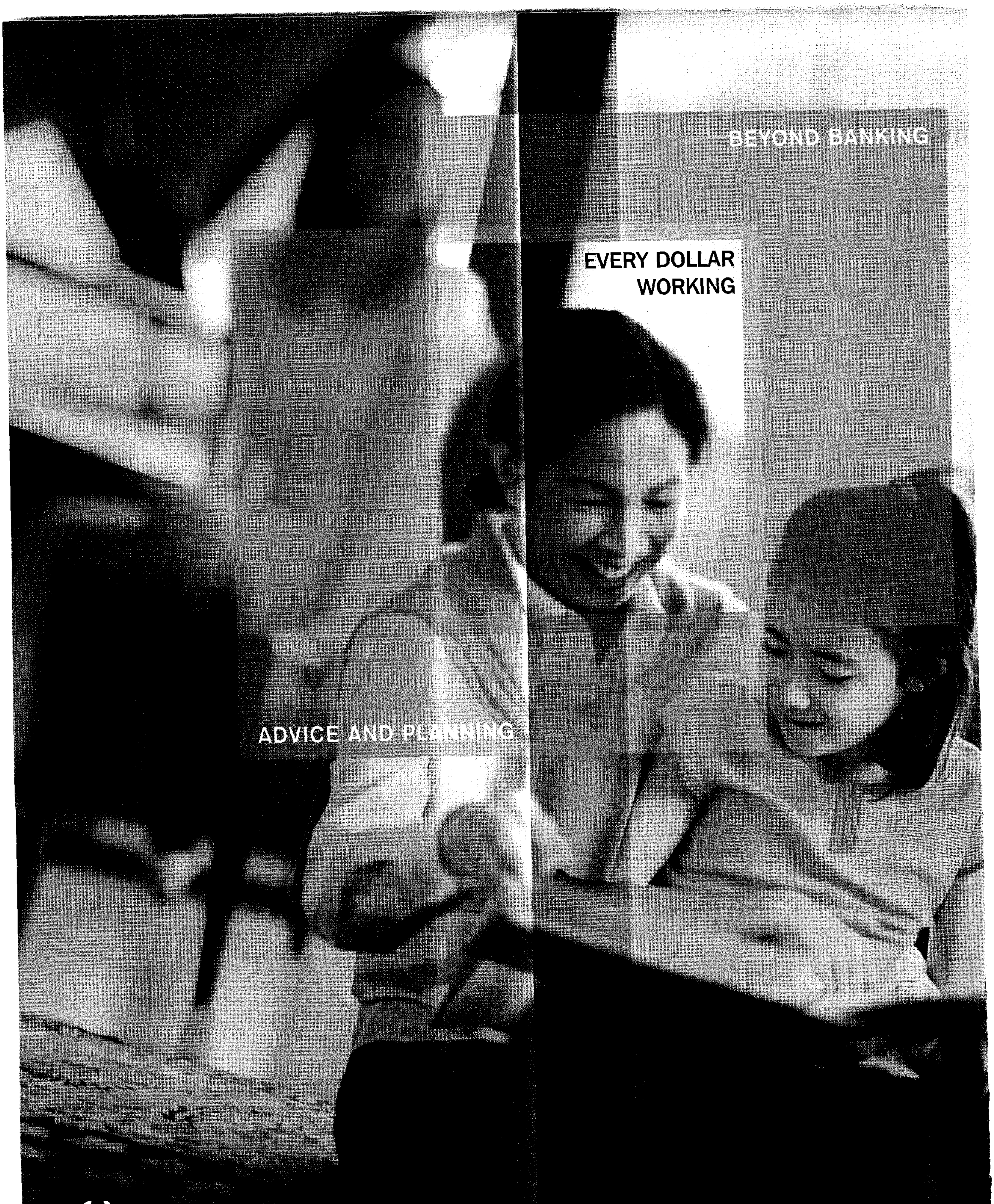

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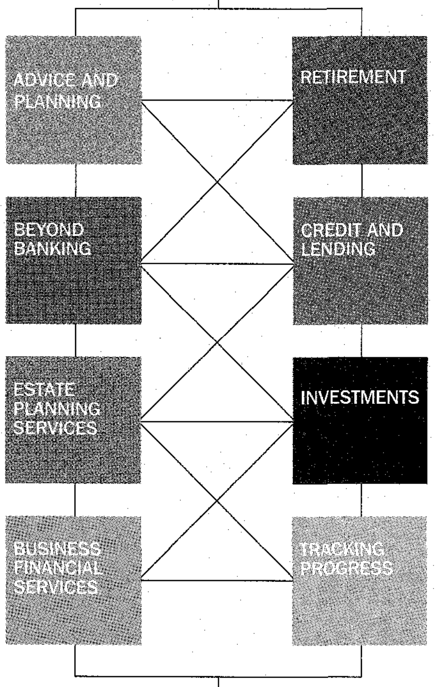

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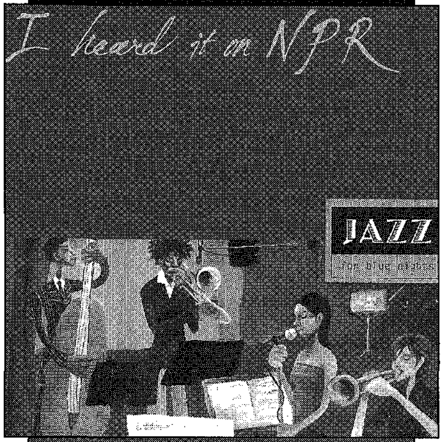

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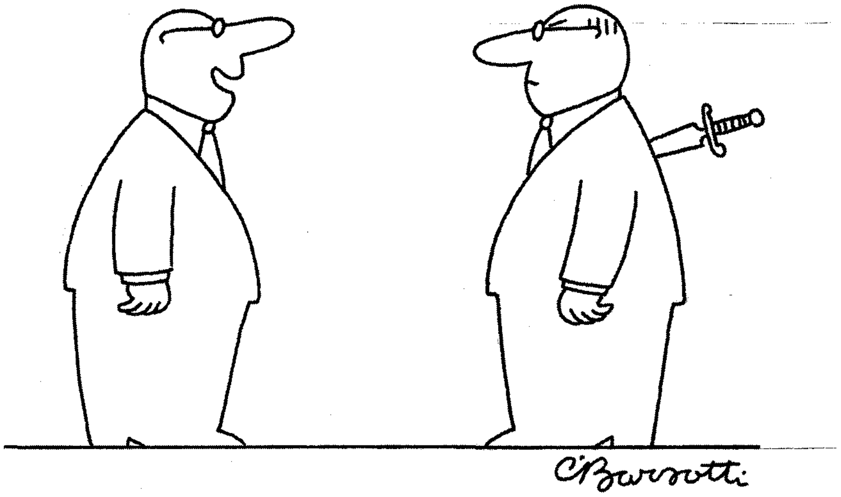

*"Oh, darn, now I've ceded the moral high ground."*

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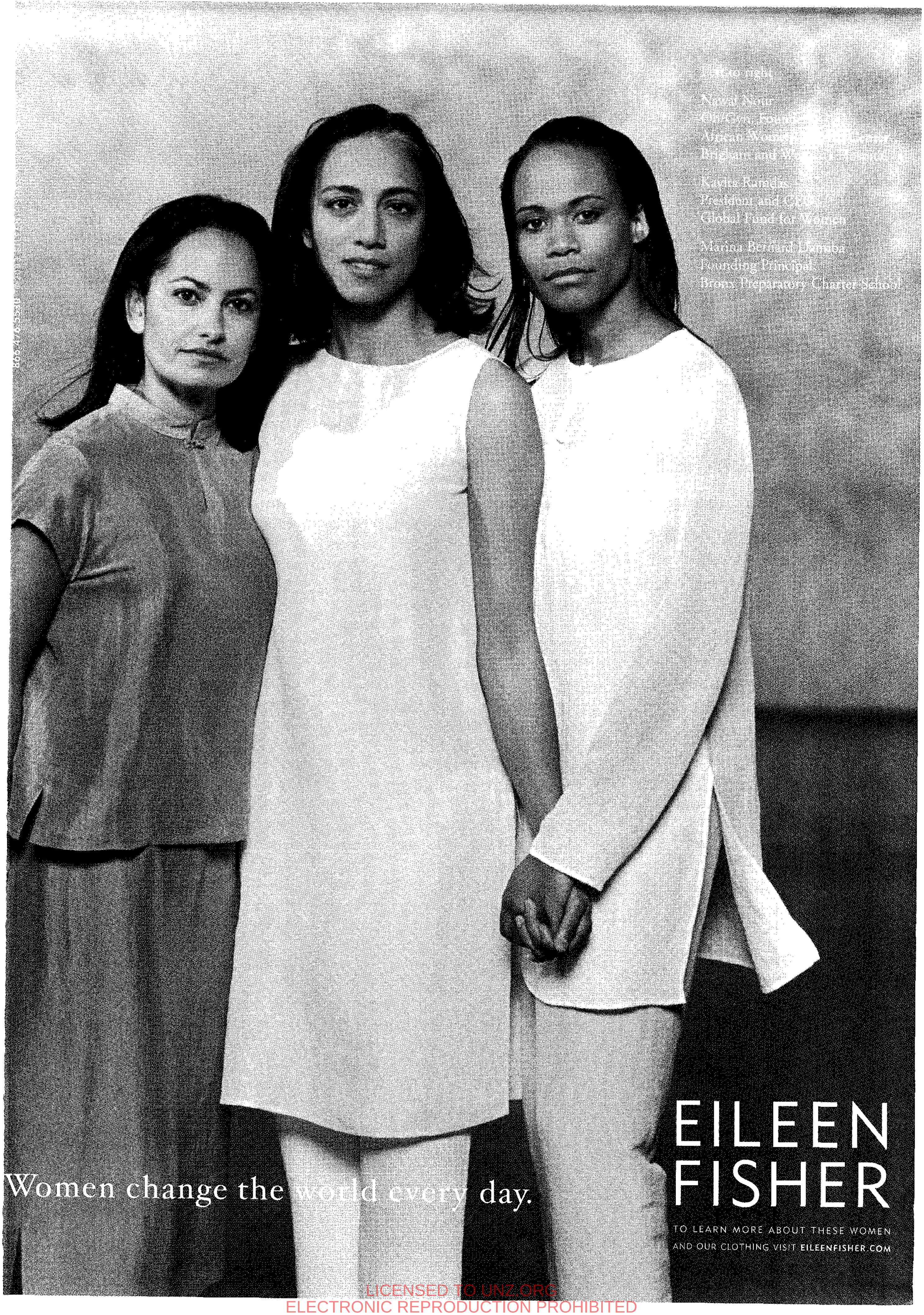
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## PHILLIS WHEATLEY'S VISIONS

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in his essay on Phillis Wheatley, the poet and slave, writes that, from the late nineteenth century, Wheatley was viewed as a "symbol of artificiality, of spiritless and rote convention," even—indeed, especially—by other African-Americans ("Phillis Wheatley on Trial," January 20th). Gates is right in noting the difficulty of reconciling Wheatley's aesthetic with some of the twentieth century's prevailing critical schools (including the school of black vernacular criticism that Gates helped establish). But it would be wrong to cast her reception by African-American writers solely in these terms. In 1892, for example, Anna Julia Cooper praised Wheatley for giving the world "one hundred and twenty precious pages," through which she had "paid her debts *in song*." In the nineteen-twenties, her poems appeared, without real disparagement, in anthologies of African-American poetry. And W. E. B. Du Bois, in a 1941 lecture, said, "Phillis must have had visions of the souls and voices, who, coming after her, continued and fulfilled her promise and tradition." Nor did the sixties and seventies see her uniformly cast as a "race traitor" who was "too white to interest black critics," as Gates puts it. In 1973, Margaret Walker organized a celebration of the bicentennial of Wheatley's book at Jackson State College. Among those in attendance were many whose sensibilities were in line with the Black Arts Movement, such as Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, and Alice Walker, whose landmark essay "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" was written for the festival. As Margaret Walker said, "If Phillis Wheatley had only known what she had started."

*Kenneth W. Warren*
*Professor of English, University of Chicago*
*Chicago, Ill.*

## ORWELL WAS RIGHT

Louis Menand gives rather short shrift to George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language" (A Critic at Large, January 27th). Orwell did not simply "run together" his distaste for bad style and for totalitarian regimes. Rather, he was arguing that moral ugliness often creates a poor style. He notes that supporters of brutal programs of large-scale social engineering rarely refer directly to the thousands of persons who are, for instance, forced out of their homes and into camps; instead, they talk about "transfer of populations," "rectification of frontiers," "pacification," etc. Long, latinized words bereft of actual images serve the political purpose of evasion. (Although Orwell had Stalin in mind, his view applies rather neatly to American officials' statements during the Vietnam War.) What is valuable about Orwell's essay is his view that there is something dehumanizing about living in abstractions, and that politics is the key setting in which this dehumanization unfolds.

*Thomas Robbins*
*Rochester, Minn.*

"Orwell took a particular dislike to Gandhi," Menand writes, and, on the basis of the negative remarks he quotes, one might agree. But Orwell also wrote of Gandhi, "Even his worst enemies would admit that he was an interesting and unusual man who enriched the world simply by being alive." Menand disparages Orwell's doubts about the future of Gandhi's method as a political tactic, noting that "a few years later, Martin Luther King, Jr., would find a use for it." The context of Orwell's remarks, however, concerned the tactic's usefulness in places like Stalin's Russia, "where opponents of the regime disappear in the middle of the night and are never heard of again." Without freedom of the press and of assembly, it was impossible to make such a movement work. Here, at least, Orwell was surely right.

*Robert Holloway*
*New York City*

•

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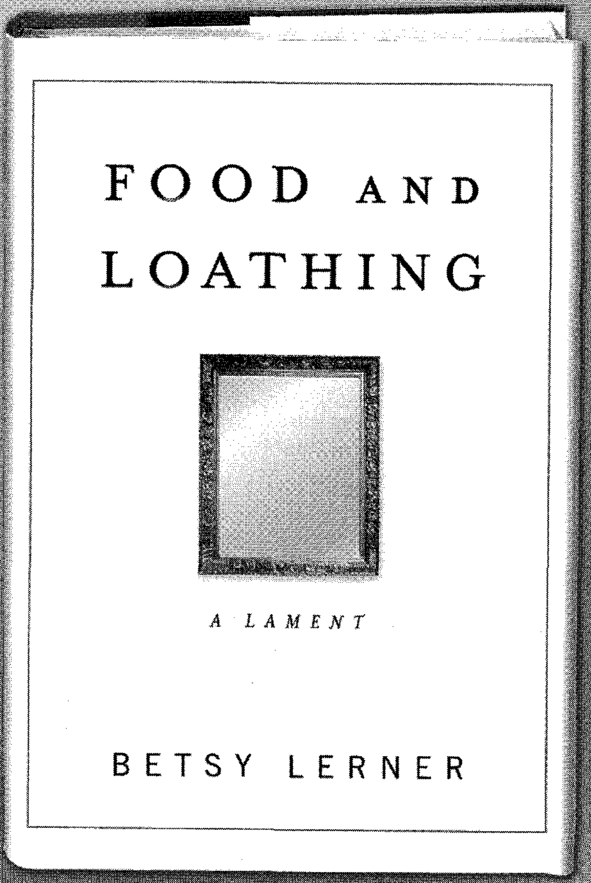

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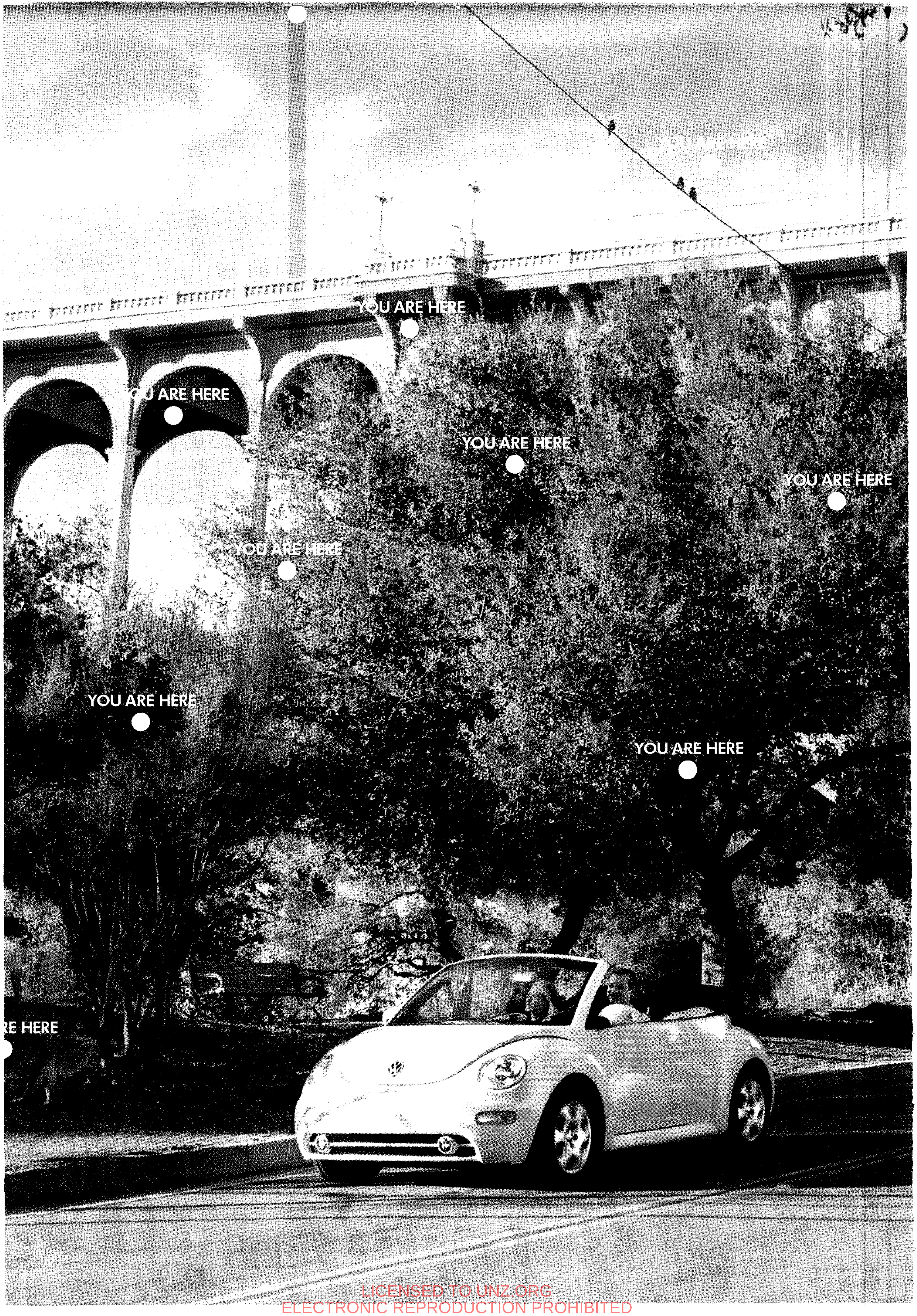
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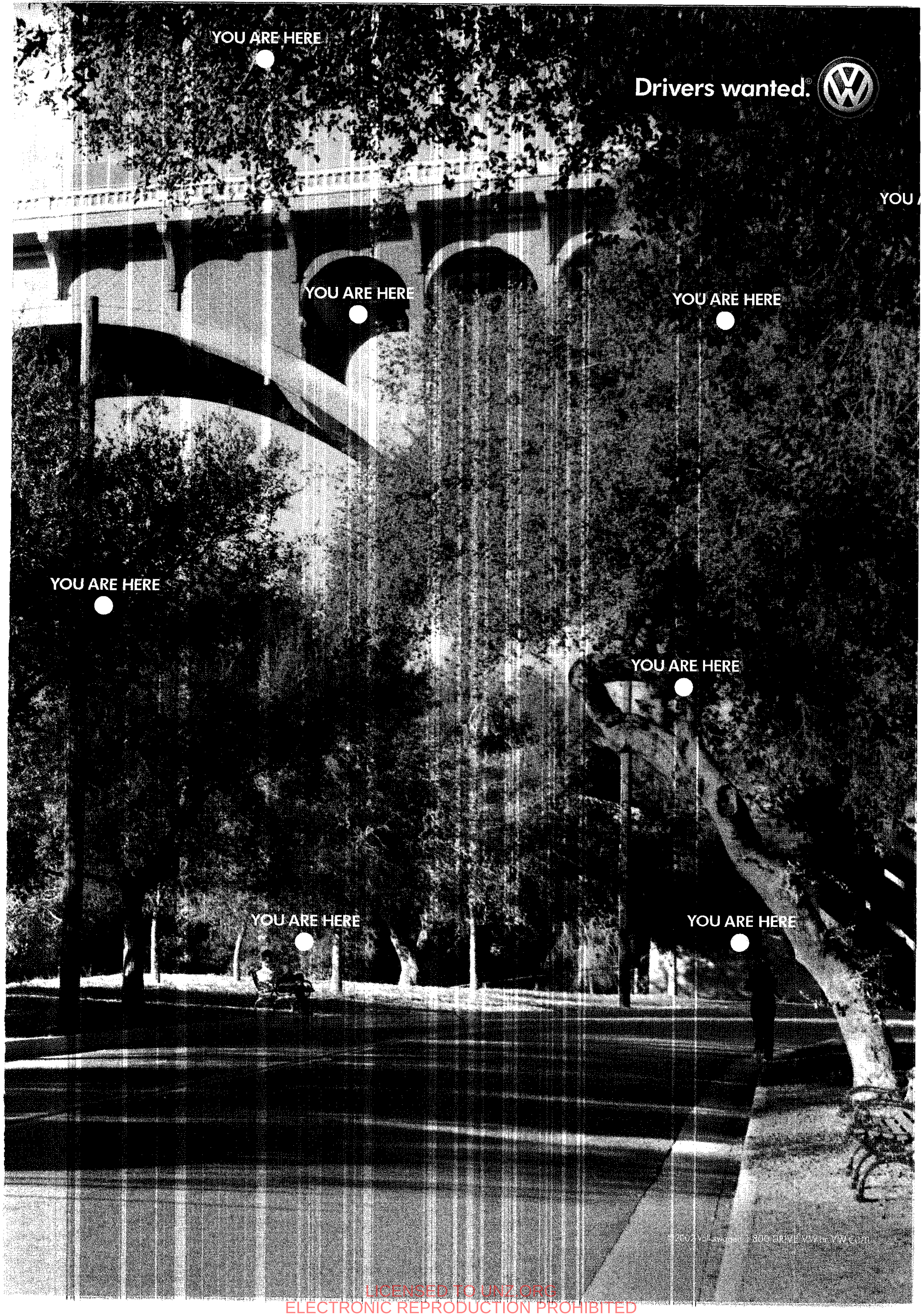
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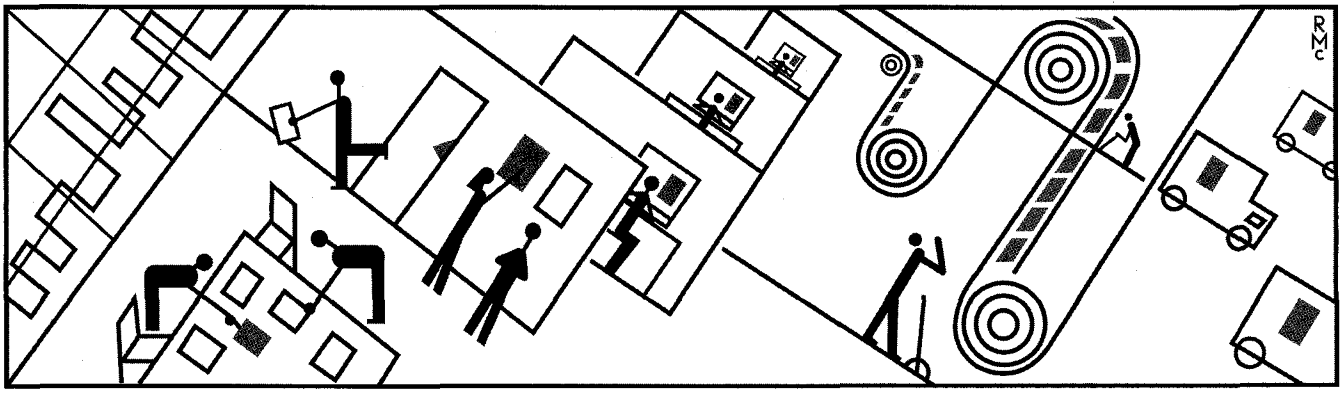

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## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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**CITY CENTER ENCORES!**
The revival company kicks off its tenth anniversary with a lightly staged reading of Harold Arlen's "House of Flowers"—a musical about feuding brothels on an island in the West Indies. Feb. 13-16. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

**DUBLIN CAROL**
Conor McPherson directs his new play, which features Keith Nobbs, Jim Norton, and Kerry O'Malley. In previews. Opens Feb. 20 at 7. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

**FAR AND WIDE**
The Mint Theatre Company's artistic director, Jonathan Bank, directs his new adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's "Das Weite Land," a drama about a wife whose devotion oppresses her faithless husband. Schnitzler's popularity was such that the play premièred simultaneously in nine European cities when it opened, in 1911. In previews. Opens Feb. 17 at 7. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

**LITTLE FISH**
In a new musical by Michael John LaChiusa ("The Wild Party"), inspired by stories by Deborah Eisenberg, Jennifer Laura Thompson plays a New York woman in search of the right man. Choreographed and directed by Graciela Daniele. In previews. Opens Feb. 13 at 6:30. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St., west of Eighth Ave. 212-246-4422.)

**OBSERVE THE SONS OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME**
Frank McGuinness's play stars Richard Easton, Justin Theroux, and Scott Wolf, and tells the story of a platoon of Irish Protestant volunteers who signed up for the Battle of the Somme. Directed by Nicholas Martin. In previews. Opens Feb. 24 at 6:45. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

**TAKE ME OUT**
Richard Greenberg's popular play, directed by Joe Mantello, is set to reopen in the Walter Kerr. In previews. (219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

## OPENED RECENTLY

**ADULT ENTERTAINMENT**
Elaine May's laugh-out-loud sortie into the world of public-access pornography, directed by Stanley Donen, features Heidi-the-Ho and her porn-star pals—who long to have words, not just organs, in their mouths. May loves her collection of lost meatheads, and her fine cast, including Danny Aiello, Jeannie Berlin, Eric Elice, and Linda Halaska, makes you care for them even as May pokes gentle fun at their stupidity. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/23 & 30/02.) (Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave. 212-239-6200.)

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| 23 | 24 | 25 | | | | |

**BEDBOUND**
The curtain falls (yes, falls) at the beginning of this startling piece of theatre, written and directed by Enda Walsh, to reveal a man and a woman in a bed—he in full business dress, she in a nightgown—enisled in a floor-to-ceiling sea of clutter worthy of "American Buffalo." The initial choked silence of the man (Brían F. O'Byrne) soon explodes in a storm of words that tells a tale of violence, sex, and the furniture business, and only gradually reveals the relationship between the two characters. O'Byrne's performance as the insanely ambitious salesman is both scary and hilarious. As the woman, Jenna Lamia is equally impressive, providing comic and tragic grace notes. Set design by Klara Zieglerova. (Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. Closes March 2.)

**BITTER BIERCE; OR, THE FRICTION WE CALL GRIEF**
Mac Wellman directs his new play about the life and work of Ambrose Bierce, the Ohio-born author of "The Devil's Dictionary," who worked as a journalist in New York and London, fought in the Civil War, and disappeared in Mexico in 1914, while tracking the exploits of Pancho Villa. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 10th St. 212-477-5288. Through March 2.)

**LA BOHÈME**
Baz Luhrmann has reset Puccini's opera in a cinematic Paris of 1957—on the eve of Godard's "Breathless"—and his *moto*-ready cast of young studs looks the part. Rodolfo and Marcello wear leather jackets and boots, Mimi sports a trench coat, and the red-hot Musetta (Jessica Comeau) has hipster slacks and an Ann-Margret kittenishness. For Musetta's splendid "Quando me'n vo," the ensemble gathers on a silverized Parisian street that looks like a black-and-white Doisneau shot come to life. Rodolfo (David Miller) and Mimi (Ekaterina Solovyeva) have terrific voices, and they're both eye candy: he's a young Belmondo to her Eva Marie Saint. When this Rodolfo first lays eyes on this Mimi, enough heat jumps between the two of them to melt the snowflakes. It makes you want to hop a plane to Paris—the Paris in Baz Luhrmann's mind. Note: Three rotating casts perform the lead roles. (Broadway, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV, PART I**
In the Eleventh Hour Theatre Company cabaret-style production of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel, vodka and Georgian wine will be served half an hour before curtain, and piroshki and other zakuski will also be available. Directed by Alexander Harrington. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101. Through Feb. 23.)

**COMEDIANS**
Trevor Griffiths' 1975 play, revived by the New Group, sets out to prove that comedy isn't funny, and succeeds too well. The show has an excellent cast, led by Jim Dale, as a former music-hall comedian who teaches amateur Manchester comics how to clean up their acts, and Raúl Esparza, as a sociopath whose routine would wipe the smile off anyone's face. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Closes Feb. 23.)

**COOKIN' AT THE COOKERY: THE MUSIC AND TIMES OF ALBERTA HUNTER**
There is a scene in the Melting Pot's bio-musical of the blues singer Alberta Hunter in which the whip-slim mimic Debra Walton—who plays Alberta as a little girl, and goes on to play a white nurse, an octogenarian club manager named Barney Josephson, and a hep-cat record producer named Chris Albertson—transforms herself in voice and expression into Louis Armstrong and accompanies Ann Duquesnay (as the grown Alberta) in a duet of "When the Saints Go Marching In." It's a preternatural accomplishment—Jane Horrocks meets Eddie Murphy. This is just one highlight of an exhilarating production, in which Duquesnay's singing (particularly of "My Handy Man Ain't Handy No More") and the duo's acting keep the audience rapt. Written and directed by Marion J. Caffey, with musical direction by George Caldwell. (Theatre 3, at 311 W. 43rd St. 212-279-4200. Closes March 2.)

**DEBBIE DOES DALLAS**
A saucy, post-modern musical, adapted from the porn film by Erica Schmidt, and well played by Jamie Day (as Debbie), Mary Catherine Garrison as a jealous fellow-cheerleader, Jeff Skowron as Debbie's quarterback heartthrob, Rick, and Ken Barnett as the mustachioed Señor Bradley. (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 212-239-6200.)

**FIFTH OF JULY**
Look at Kenny and John's chukka boots, see Gwen's suède fringe and June's strappy leather sandals, take in the soft skin of Weston's bare shoulders under his overalls, watch them all gather with an air of occasion around a bottle of white wine—and you know it's the seventies. Rarely has dialogue flown as surely

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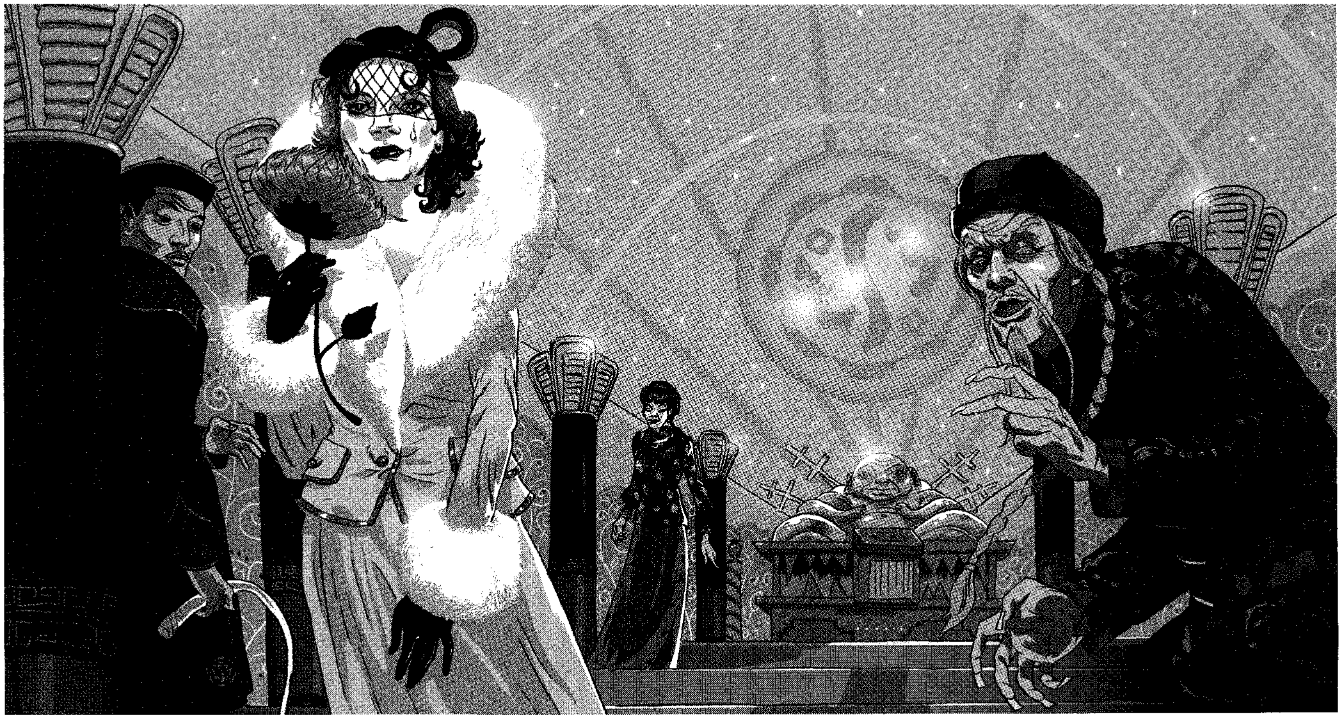
as it does in this play, the first in Lanford Wilson's trilogy about the unconventional Talleys of conventional Lebanon, Missouri. After twenty-five years, the idea that cobbled-together families are as good as nuclear ones is no longer new, but Wilson got there first. Robert Sean Leonard is convincing as Kenny Talley, paralyzed in the Vietnam War, whose terror of his future is more heartbreaking than his inability to walk, and Parker Posey gives a breakthrough performance as Gwen, the woman married to the hunk John Landis (well played by David Harbour), whom Kenny and his sister, June, lusted after at Berkeley. Posey's Gwen is vital, mischievous, and surprising—a generous narcissist. As June, Jessalyn Gilsig seems uptight and stewardessy, and Michael Gladis, playing Kenny's gardener lover, Jed, is rather limp. Still, the cast members work superbly together, fired by Jo Bonney's direction and Wilson's dynamic script. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)



*Charles Busch as Lady Sylvia Allington and Marcy McGuigan as Dr. Wu in "Shanghai Moon," at Greenwich House.*

TOMER HANUKA

**FLOWER DRUM SONG**

Part fashion show, part night-club act, part hymn to Asian-American diversity, David Henry Hwang's update of the 1958 Rodgers and Hammerstein show, set in San Francisco's Chinatown, works far better than the original. Directed and choreographed by Robert Longbottom. (11/4/02) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE GIFTED PROGRAM**

You saw "The Breakfast Club"and "Heathers." So why see Ruben Carbajal's revisitation of the war between high-school burnouts, popular people, and dorks? Because Mike Shapiro's direction crackles, Joey (Brenton Popolizio) is one sexy nerd, and the outrage of Lester Suh (Aron Yoo) at his dungeonmaster's misuse of elves will convulse anybody who has ever known a D. & D. obsessive. Carbajal's humor alternates between lacerating and indulgent, and never slackens. Plus, you get to hear the Kiss ballad "Beth" played unironically. (Center Stage, 48 W. 21st St. 212-206-1515. Closes Feb. 23.)

**HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY**

In Randal Myler's beguiling musical biography of the hard-drinking, softhearted crooner, Jason Petty retraces Williams's journey from hardscrabble childhood to honky-tonk renown. The audience keeps him company all the while, tapping their toes even when he's so lonesome he could cry. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. Closes Feb. 23.)

**IT JUST CATCHES**

Carol Hemingway presents a new play based on five of her famous father-in-law's short stories and accompanied by the music of Cole Porter, who, apparently, was one of Papa's cronies. Directed by Edward Hastings. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)

**JULIA SWEENEY IN THE FAMILY WAY**

The "Saturday Night Live" veteran Julia Sweeney (best known for her androgynous character, Pat) sheds light, and humor, on the arduous process of becoming the single parent of an adopted child in her latest autobiographical one-woman show. Directed by Mark Brokaw. (Ars Nova Theatre, 511 W. 54th St. 212-206-1515.)

**JULIUS CAESAR**

In Karin Coonrod's urgent staging, Shakespeare's lessons of hubris and betrayal travel to the present age of Internet bubble and political brinksmanship. On a set that evokes Wall Street, the players wear business suits instead of togas. Earl Hindman's Caesar has the bluster of a used-car salesman, and Daniel Oreskes' Cassius shows the perfidy of a Gordon Gekko, but Thomas M. Hammond's stirring portrayal of Brutus is both timely and timeless. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-239-6200. Closes March 2.)

**KIMBERLY AKIMBO**

David Lindsay-Abaire's new comedy, which incorporates sitcom conventions with disease-movie-of-the-week melodrama, chronicles the misadventures of Kimberly, a teen-ager who suffers from a rare aging disorder that makes her look much older than her years. (She is played by Marylouise Burke, who is sixty-two.) In Lindsay-Abaire's topsy-turvy world, which owes a bit to Ionesco and Durang, Kimberly is an old soul, and the wacky grownups around her are hopelessly immature. Though the play doesn't offer much in the way of narrative propulsion, David Petrarca's sparky direction keeps it galloping along, Robert Brill's candy-colored sets add cheer, and Burke's wide-eyed performance is endearing and surprisingly believable. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

**MAN OF LA MANCHA**

If hearing "The Impossible Dream" four times without intermission is your idea of a good night out, then "Man of La Mancha" is for you. Superbly staged by Jonathan Kent, the show features a sensational set by Paul Brown that has more tricks than a circus pony, but no amount of proficient talent (Brian Stokes Mitchell is the nutty knight of faith, and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is the toothsome tart Aldonza) and no amount of high-tech prowess can disguise the fact that this Don Quixote-Sancho Panza cartoon is romantic kitsch. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM**

Whoopi Goldberg and Charles S. Dutton join forces in a revival of the August Wilson play. Directed by Marion McClinton. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**MARK OF CAIN**

A new play by the Danish playwright Morti Vizki links the tragedies of Auschwitz with the Biblical conflict between Cain and Abel. (78th Street Theatre, 236 W. 78th St. 212-206-1515. Through Feb. 22.)

**MEDEA**

In her daring modern interpretation of Euripides' drama, well directed by Deborah Warner, Fiona Shaw enters wearing sunglasses, a cardigan sweater, and a tidy summer dress, the picture of almost demure self-control. She has a lithe, muscular body and a sinuous mind to match, but she is a nervy woman pushed to the end of her tether, her mind and heart racing in adrenaline-pumping panic. (12/23 & 30/02) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. Closes Feb. 22.)

**RADIANT BABY**

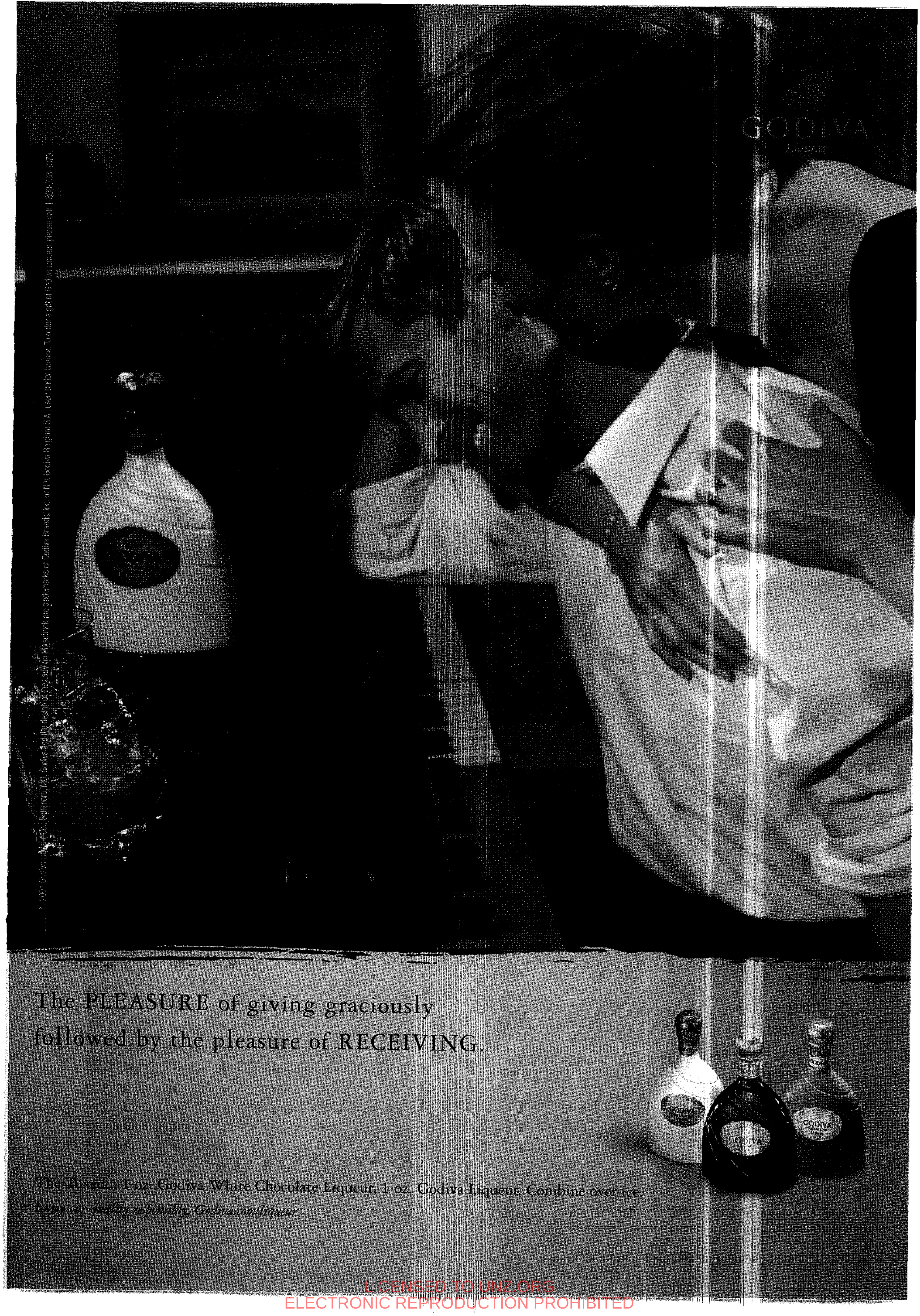
George C. Wolfe directs a new musical about the nineteen-eighties urban artist Keith Haring, with a book by Stuart Ross; music by Debra Barsha; lyrics by Ira Gasman, Stuart Ross, and Debra Barsha; and a set by Riccardo Hernández. The choreography is by Fatima Robinson, who is known for her work in Gap commercials and music videos for Michael Jackson, Mary J. Blige, the Backstreet Boys, and others. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

**REQUIEM FOR WILLIAM**

Jack Cummings directs a twenty-six-member cast in a Transport Group production that ties together seven short plays by William Inge, including "To Boblink, for Her Spirit," "The Rainy Afternoon," and "A Social Event." (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 212-206-1515. Through March 2.)

**SHANGHAI MOON**

In Charles Busch's swanning romp through thirties film conceits, set in Shanghai in 1931, Busch is Lady Sylvia Allington, a red-headed American temptress whose satin curves and breathy accent (somewhere in between Cary Grant's and Joan Greenwood's) captivate both her credulous, constipated husband, Lord Allington—memorably rendered by Daniel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*fangs cannot outwit*
*orangutangs.*

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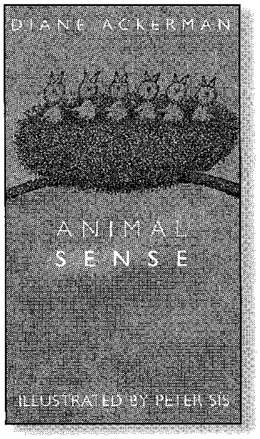
*sitting / But never walk or*
*take up knitting.*

*Living things all feel and*
*sense / Their way through*
*every happenstance. . . .*



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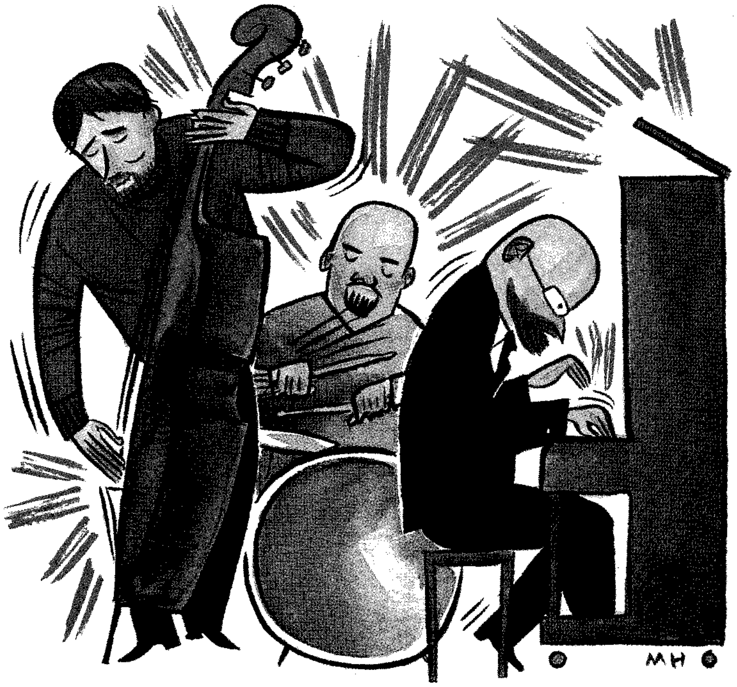
Gerroll, who later doubles as an opium-smuggling pirate—and General Gong Fei, played by B. D. Wong, who makes his entrance in elaborate military dress, cracking a bullwhip. Every part is actor's taffy, from the Shanghai madam Mrs. Caroll (Becky Ann Baker) to Gong Fei's discarded concubine, Mah Li (Sekiya Billman), to the hunchbacked, long-whiskered temple attendant Dr. Wu, played with relish by Marcy McGuigan. As Queen Victoria remarked after seeing "The Mikado," "The story is rather silly"—but that doesn't keep it from being wonderful, giddy fun. Directed by Carl Andress. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 212-633-9632.)

**TARTUFFE**
In the Roundabout production of Molière's farce, Kathryn Meisle (as Elmire) has the look of a very young Diana Rigg. Her open, intelligent face lets us know that, even if Elmire suffers fools gladly, she remains mistress of her own appealing wit. As Orgon, her pious, deluded husband, Brian Bedford hams it up with all sorts of tics, widening his eyes and sighing loudly, while Henry Goodman plays the trickster Tartuffe as a sexy rogue who takes pleasure in all kinds of flesh. But it's Meisle who, with her low-key comic relief, makes us forgive the show's otherwise groaning pyrotechnics. Directed by Joe Dowling. (2/3/03) (American Airlines, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. Closes Feb. 23.)

**THE WINTER'S TALE**
At the Classic Stage, Barry Edelstein sets Shakespeare's unwieldy play in the present day, but the modern context doesn't help stabilize the drama. Dressed in business cocktail attire suggestive of neurasthenic yuppiedom, the players move uncomfortably across a minimally furnished stage, swallowed by the empty space between them. In the first act, Barbara Garrick's Hermione is competent, but her too-pregnant belly (carrying Perdita) bounces in front of her like a volleyball, keeping David Strathairn, as Leontes, at a physical and emotional remove. In any case, Strathairn's Leontes is too gentlemanly for such a big, messy, murderous part. The second act offers one torment and one delight. Teagle F. Bougere as Autolycus plays his "blackness" as an offensive joke: Stepin Fetchit meets Redd Foxx. But Elizabeth Reaser, as Perdita, has untheatrical authenticity. With her translucent skin, red hair, and dancer's form, she draws the audience in without distracting it. She's a lady, and a star, and she brings a glimmer of clarity to a play that is often difficult to follow. (2/10/03) (136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210.)

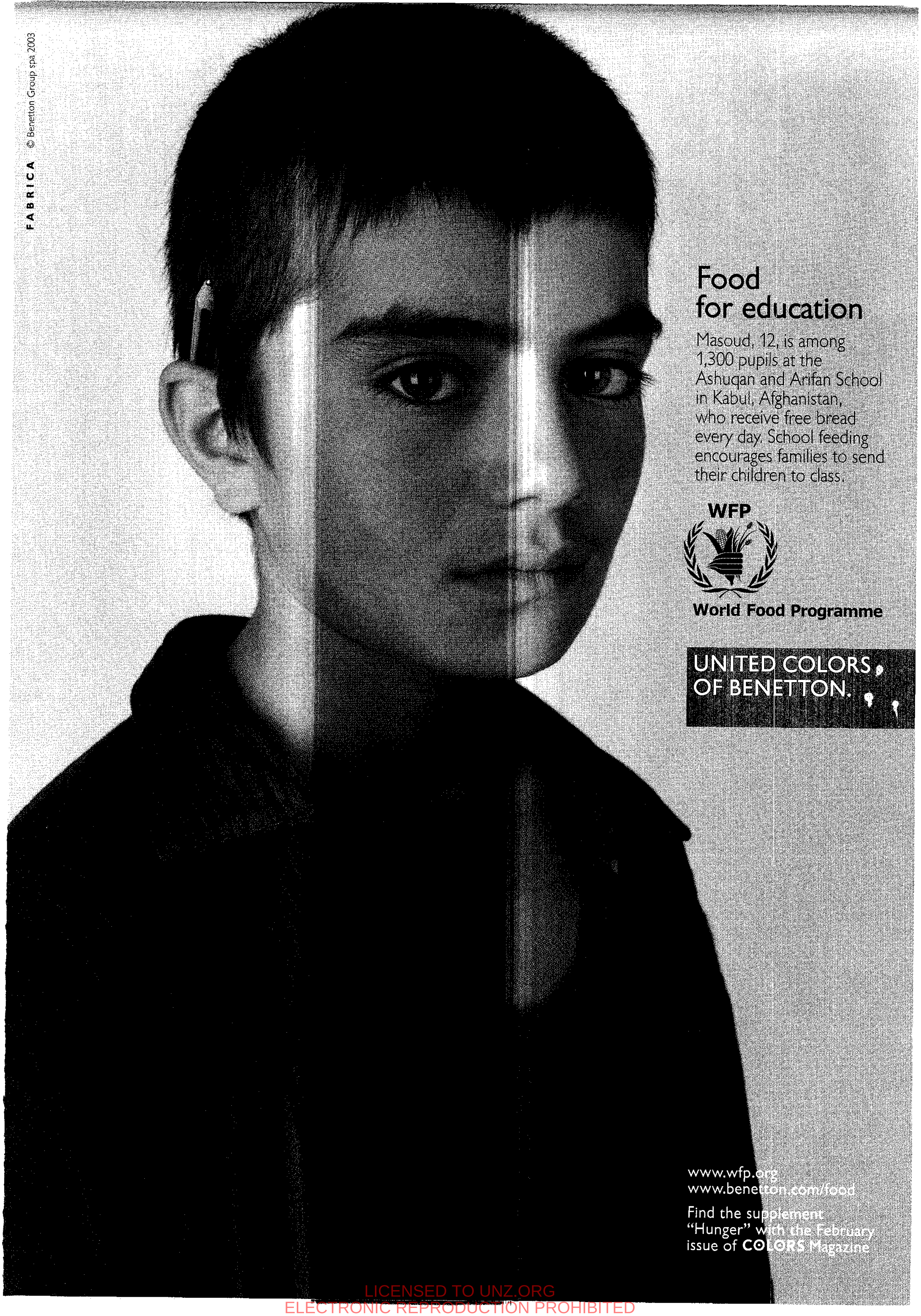
## LONG RUNS

**AIDA**
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.
**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**
Lunt-Fontanne, 2[illegible]h St. 212-307-4747.
**BETTY RULES**
Zipper, 336 W. 37[illegible] St. 212-239-6200.
**BLUE MAN GROUP**
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 212-254-4370.
**CABARET**
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.
**CHICAGO**
Ambassador, 215 [illegible] 49th St. 212-239-6200.
**DE LA GUARDA**
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.
**THE EXONERATED**
45 Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.
**42ND STREET**
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.
**FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE**
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**THE GRADUATE**
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**HAIRSPRAY**
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.
**THE LION KING**
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.
**MAMMA MIA!**
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.
**METAMORPHOSES**
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200. (Closes Feb. 16.)
**LES MISÉRABLES**
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.
**MOVIN' OUT**
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.
**OKLAHOMA!**
Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 212-307-4100.
**PANIC! (HOW TO BE HAPPY!)**
St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-533-4650.



*The Bad Plus Trio, at the Village Vanguard (see Night Life—Jazz and Standards).*

MARCELLUS HALL



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Masoud, 12, is among 1,300 pupils at the Ashuqan and Arifan School in Kabul, Afghanistan, who receive free bread every day. School feeding encourages families to send their children to class.

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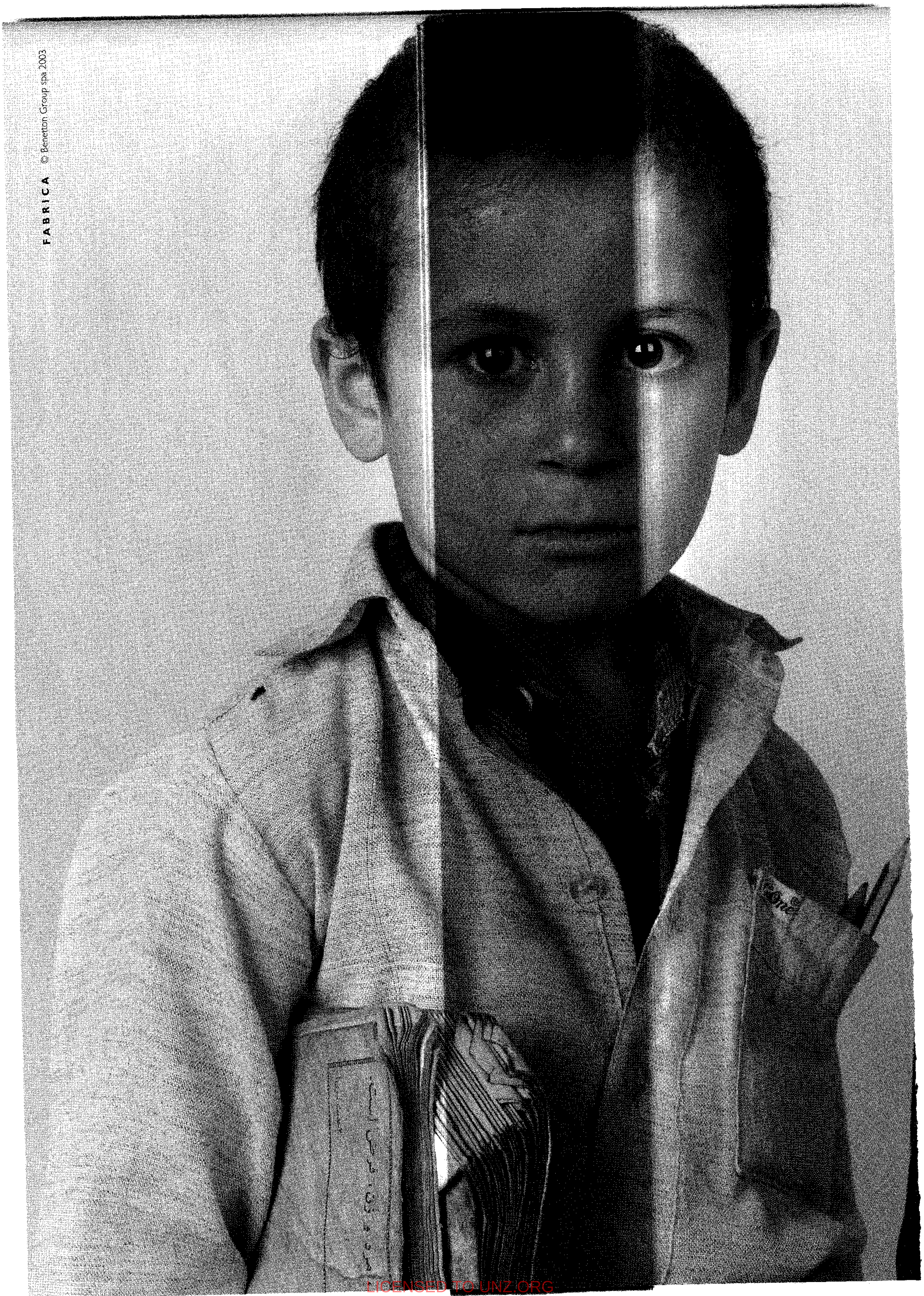

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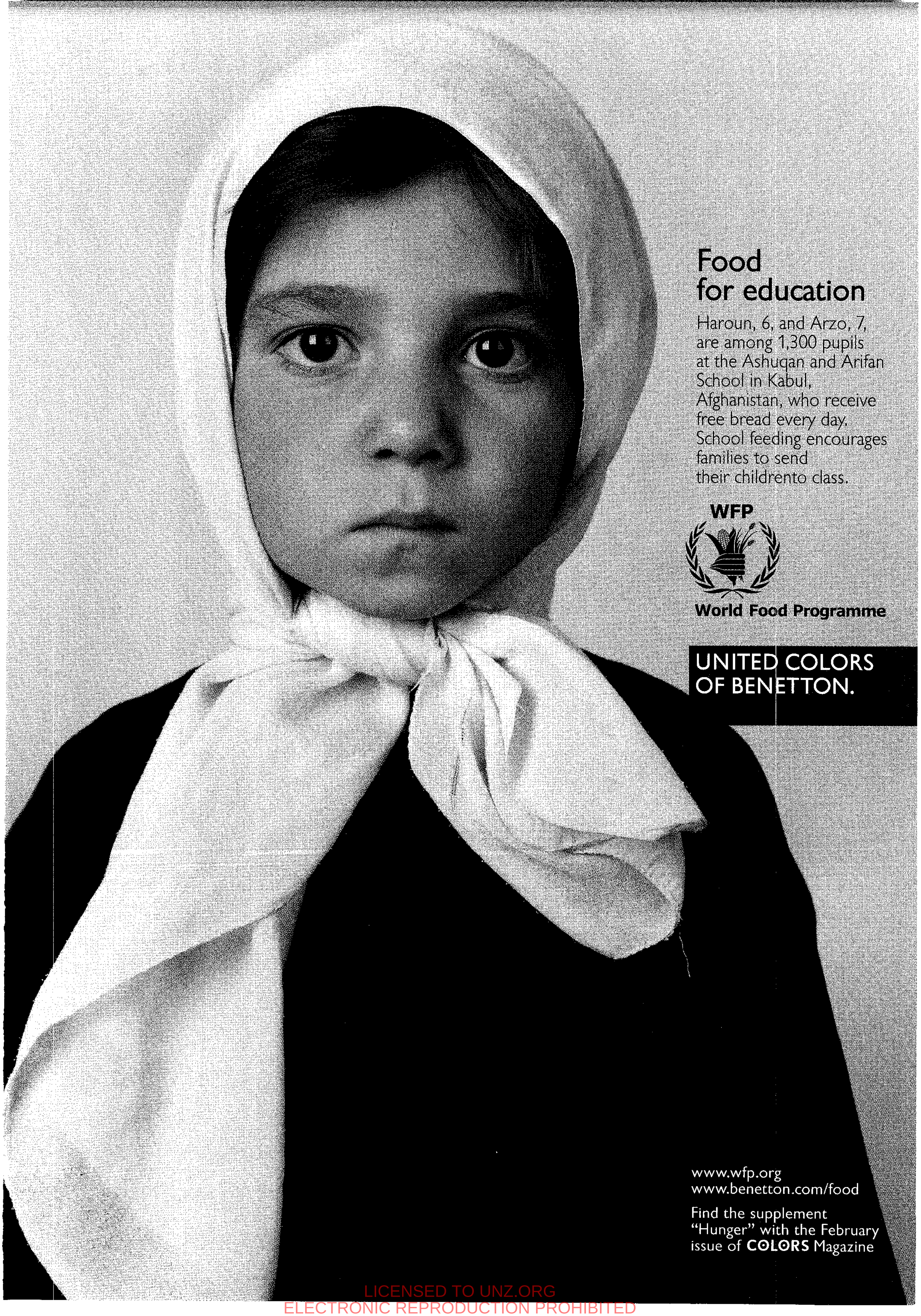

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Haroun, 6, and Arzo, 7, are among 1,300 pupils at the Ashuqan and Arifan School in Kabul, Afghanistan, who receive free bread every day. School feeding encourages families to send their childrento class.

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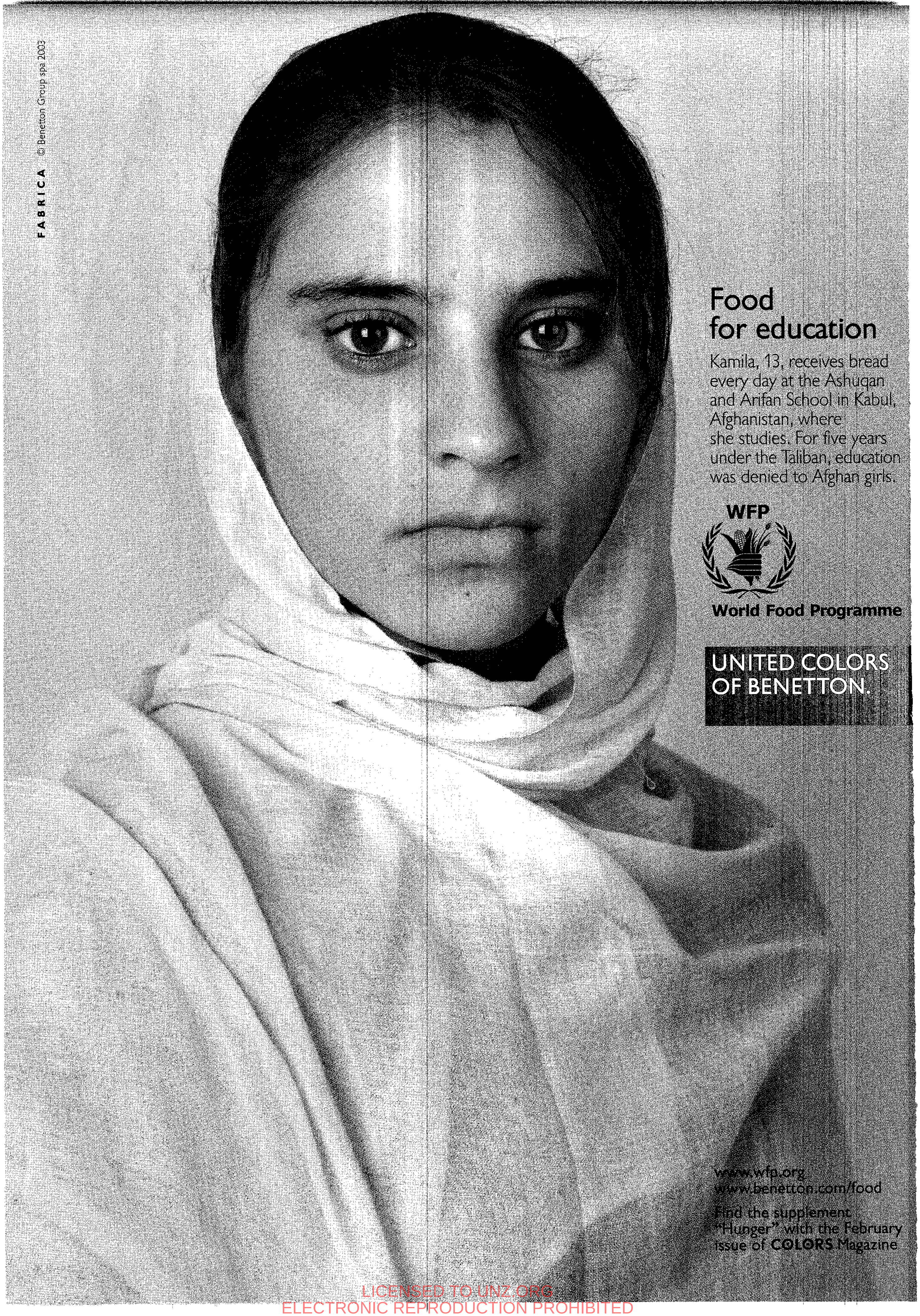

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Kamila, 13, receives bread every day at the Ashuqan and Arifan School in Kabul, Afghanistan, where she studies. For five years under the Taliban, education was denied to Afghan girls.

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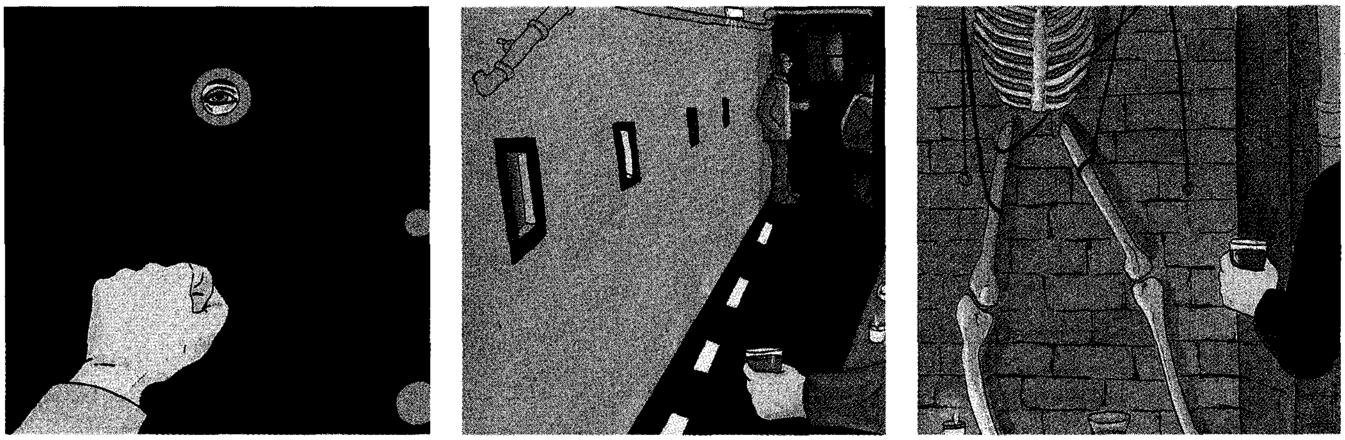
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**THE PRODUCERS**
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**RENT**
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 212-921-8000.
**RUSSELL SIMMONS' DEF POETRY JAM ON BROADWAY**
Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.
**SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE**
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.
**STOMP**
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 212-477-2477.
**TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE**
Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 212-307-4100.
**URINETOWN**
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.

## DANCE

**NEW YORK CITY BALLET**
Christopher Wheeldon's new ballet "Carousel (A Dance)," based on the Richard Rodgers musical, which had its début at City Ballet's November gala, enters the repertory. ♦ Feb. 12 at 8 (an all-Robbins program): "Interplay," "Piano Pieces," and "I'm Old Fashioned." ♦ Feb. 13 at 8: "Soirée," "Antique Epigraphs," "Variations pour une Porte et un Soupir," and "Agon." ♦ Feb. 14 at 8: "Reliquary," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ Feb. 15 at 2: "Soirée," "Valse-Fantaisie," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Chaconne." ♦ Feb. 15 at 8: "Interplay," "Sinfonia," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ Feb. 16 at 3 (an all-Balanchine program): "Mozartiana," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Tarantella," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Feb. 18 at 7:30: "Mozartiana," "Hallelujah Junction," "Sonatas and Interludes," and "I'm Old Fashioned." ♦ Feb. 19 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Chiaroscuro," "Soirée," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Feb. 20 at 8: "Square Dance," "Reliquary," "Sonatas and Interludes," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ Feb. 21 at 8: "Interplay," "Sinfonia," "Ballade," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ Feb. 22 at 2: "Reliquary," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Sinfonia," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ Feb. 22 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Tarantella," "Reliquary," "Who Cares," and "Carousel (A Dance)." ♦ Feb. 23 at 3: "Interplay," "Valse-Fantaisie," "Hallelujah Junction," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Feb. 25 at 7:30: "Coppélia." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)



*The unmarked façade and intimate confines of the midtown bar Single Room Occupancy give it a speakeasy-like atmosphere.*

LARA TOMLIN

**DAVID GORDON PICK-UP COMPANY**
Like many choreographers, David Gordon lives in his rehearsal studio. In "The Private Lives of Dancers," he turns this practical necessity into a dance-theatre work. The members of his company play shadow versions of themselves, gossiping and arguing as they rehearse, and their desultory chatter about their offstage lives inflects their loose, flowing dance. This concept could have produced an obnoxiously self-conscious show, but Gordon's metaphors have bite and strength. When a pregnant character who has decided to leave the company stops mid-movement and cries out, "I've made a mistake," the double meaning stings. And when Gordon and his wife, Valda Setterfield, take a walk accompanied by recorded conversations between well-known theatrical couples, the plot's private dilemmas acquire historical echoes. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Feb. 18-22 at 8 and Feb. 23 at 2 and 7:30.)

**"NY TANGO: PIAZZOLLA & BEYOND"**
The New York-based Argentines who make up Pablo Aslan's Avantango ensemble see the tango as an evolving form, with themselves on its ever-shifting front line. For "Piazzolla and Beyond," Aslan, the bassist who directs the ensemble, has drawn out the jazz element in Astor Piazzolla's modern tango music, adding saxophone and muted trumpet to the violin and bandoneon and letting each musician improvise solo riffs. Piazzolla's intricate music usually alienates dancers, but the members of Avantango, who are veterans of Broadway shows like "Forever Tango" and "Tango Argentino," glide smoothly on the hard-edged sound, unintimidated. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-840-2824. Feb. 14 at 8.)

**KATE GYLLENHAAL/MOCO**
In "MeMyself&You," one of three works in MoCo's February season, a woman strides across the stage, touches the man she desires, then somersaults up his torso, landing astraddle his shoulder. He casts her to the floor, yet the dance continues, as other women try their chances. Accompanied (live) by the all-female tango band Las Señoritas, the dancers convey the spirit of the tango without using its steps. "There's not one tango move in this," MoCo's artistic director, Kate Gyllenhaal, says. "I purposely stayed away from that." With this and other tactics, Gyllenhaal (she's Jake and Maggie's aunt) injects humor into her dances, despite their dark subtext of sexual rejection and invitation. The evening also includes the première of Gyllenhaal's third film, "Chromozone," in which dancers reënact the drama of sperm-and-egg interplay. "I'm interested in preserving dance in other forms than live, because it's such a short-lived art form," Gyllenhaal says. "On film it has a life forever." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Feb. 13 and Feb. 20 at 8:30.)

**DANCE SAMPLER AT SYMPHONY SPACE**
This annual four-hour dance festival lines up emerging choreographers like Kara Tatelbaum and Johannes Wieland (both recent N.Y.U. graduates) with established names like Pascal Rioult and Robert Battle. One highlight of the marathon: the Tiffany Mills Company will perform a technically demanding dance-theatre piece called "Elegy." Set to John Zorn's composition by that name, the movement gives shape to the music's aggressive outbursts. As women in Tippi Hedren dresses and men in crypto-assassin garb tease and bully one another, psychosexual tension builds, conjuring the violence of a Hitchcock dénouement. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Feb. 15 at 7.)

**ELISA MONTE DANCE**
In "Light Lies," Elisa Monte celebrates the work of Josef Albers, the Bauhaus artist who showed that juxtaposition makes colors change. Dressed in white, the company dancers swirl around a square of shifting hues; soloists are captured in circles of tinted light. The dancing—relentless, explosive, but classically exact—matches an ecstatic track by the founders of Bang on a Can, which features strident choral singing punctuated by stabs of electric guitar. This season's repertory also includes the return of the company's best-known work, "Treading" (1979), and "Lost Things" (2001), a haunting elegy choreographed before 9/11 but movingly colored by that event. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Feb. 12-15 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 2 and 7:30.)

## NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

**THE CREOLE ZYDECO FARMERS**
For more than a decade now the Farmers have harvested the fruit of the southwestern-Louisiana music scene and distributed it around the nation. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 212-685-7597. Feb. 12 at 7:30.)

**AL JARREAU**
This adept and likable vocalist has delivered a goes-down-easy brew for some thirty years. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 212-307-7171. Feb. 14 at 8.)

**WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE**
The Argentinean bassist and composer Pablo Aslan offers a Valentine's Day concert of tango music, complete with half a dozen dancers from Astor Piazzolla's homeland. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Feb. 14 at 8.) ♦ The institute's "Masters of American Music" series brings in Archie Shepp and Roswell Rudd. The saxophonist Shepp and the trombonist Rudd's interaction isn't quite as volatile as it was during the free-jazz heyday of the mid-sixties, but there's still more than enough bluster and grit to remind us of what we've been missing. The bassist Reggie Workman and the drummer Andrew Cyrille, two vets of the sixties trenches, provide genuine rhythmic tumble. (Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. Feb. 21 at 8.) ♦ Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill present the finest in Irish fiddling and guitar work. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Feb. 22 at 8.) (For more information about all the shows, call 212-545-7536.)

**JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER**
The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra acknowledges the international imperatives of the music by inviting the Spanish pianist Chano Dominguez to share his Iberian spirit during their "Flamenco Nights" concerts. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 13 and Feb. 15 at 8.) ♦ The orchestra moves downtown for a Valentine's Day program of swing music and dancing at the Supper Club. (240 W. 47th St. Feb. 14 at 8.) ♦ One of

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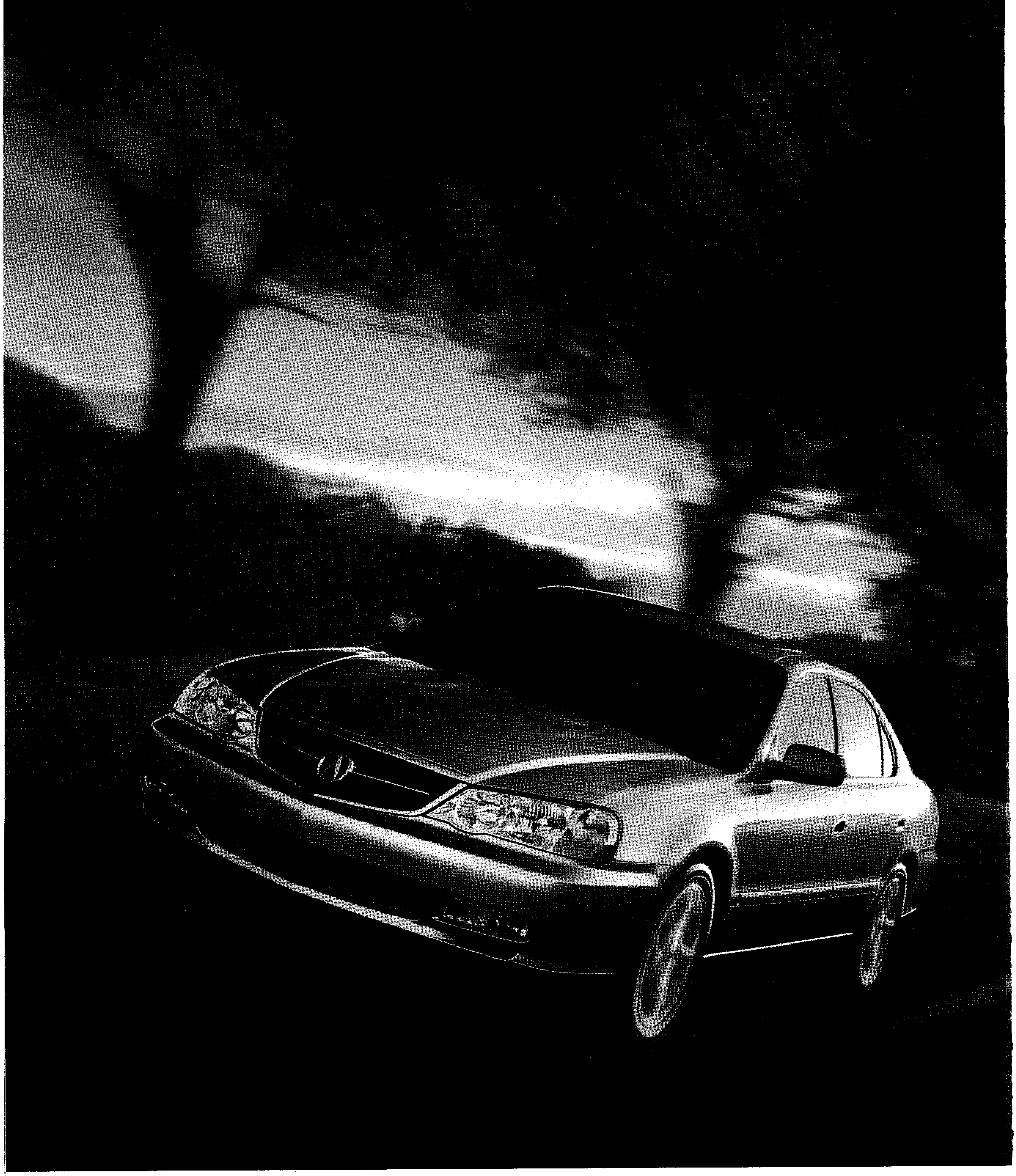

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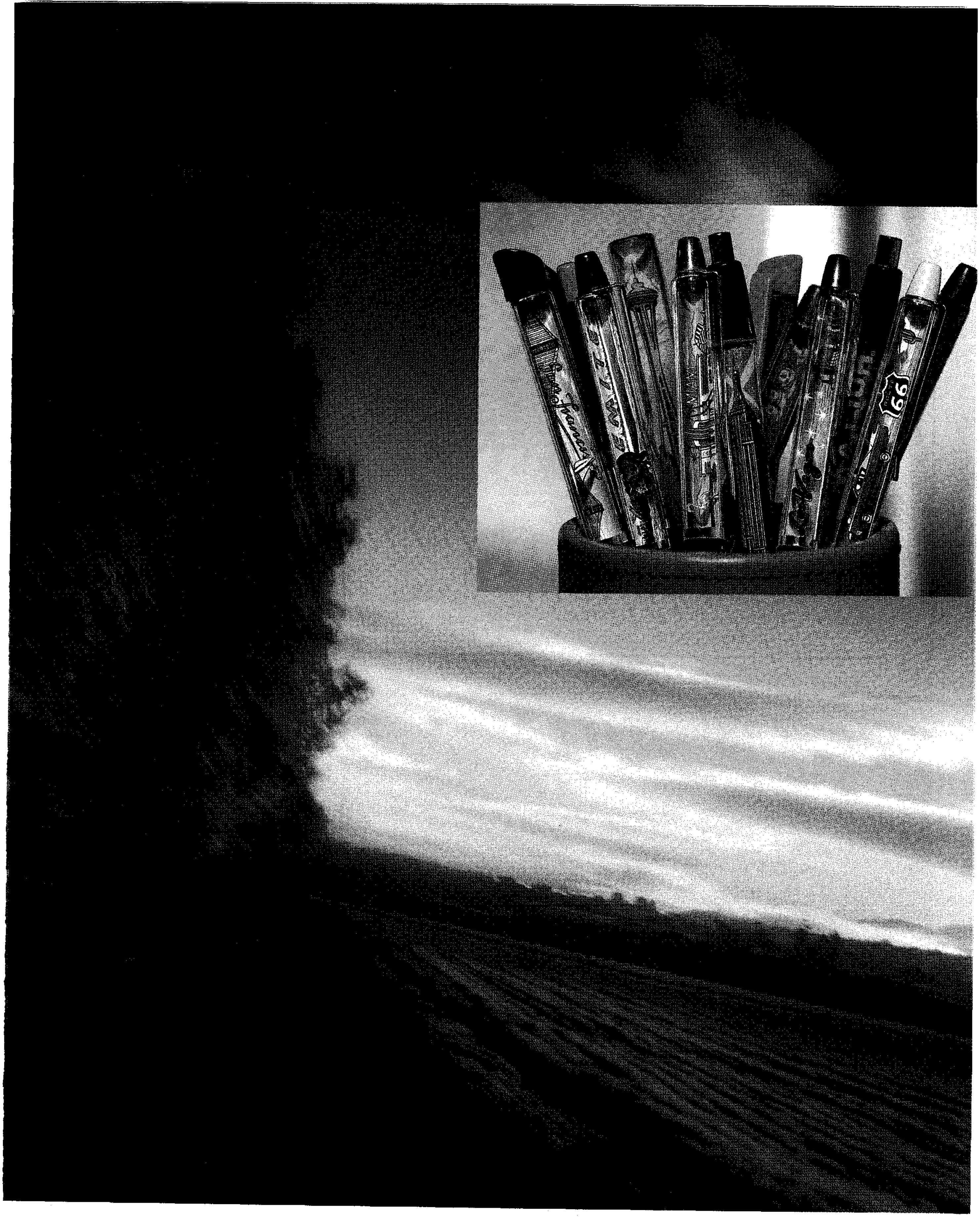

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the great drummers of the hard-bop era, Louis Hayes is best known for his swinging contributions to Cannonball Adderley's classic quintet. Hayes remains a dynamo; the younger players joining him, including the tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander, had better be in good shape. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. Feb. 20-22 at 8.) (For more information about all the shows, call 212-721-6500.)

**MIDWINTER NIGHT SWING**
Dancing under the Winter Garden's palm trees, with the classic swing of the Billy Strayhorn Orchestra, on Feb. 18, and the Cuban music of Los Soneros de Oriente, on Feb. 20. (World Financial Center, Battery Park. 212-945-0505. Shows are at 7, with a dance lesson starting at 6:30.)

**"SALUTE TO KURT WEILL"**
Foster Hirsh, the author of "Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway," is the host of a tribute to the composer, with Kitty Carlisle Hart, Phoebe Brand, Russell Nype, William Duell, and other veterans of vintage Weill productions. (Arthur Seelen Theatre, Drama Book Shop, 250 W. 40th St. 212-944-0595. Feb. 17 at 8.)

**PAUL WELLER**
Crowned the king of Dadrock (that would be the sixties-influenced music performed by aging rock stars) in his native England, the venerable Modfather may no longer be the angry young man who fronted the Jam back in the late seventies, but he remains remarkably prolific. Since dissolving his somewhat schmalzy second band, the Style Council, in 1990, he's blazed a critically acclaimed solo path that owes more to soul music than it does to the punk rock of his youth. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. Feb. 21 at 7:30.)

**ANDRE THIERRY & ZYDECO MAGIC**
A pre-Mardi Gras party. (La Belle Époque. Feb. 23 at 7:30.)

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## CLUBS

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

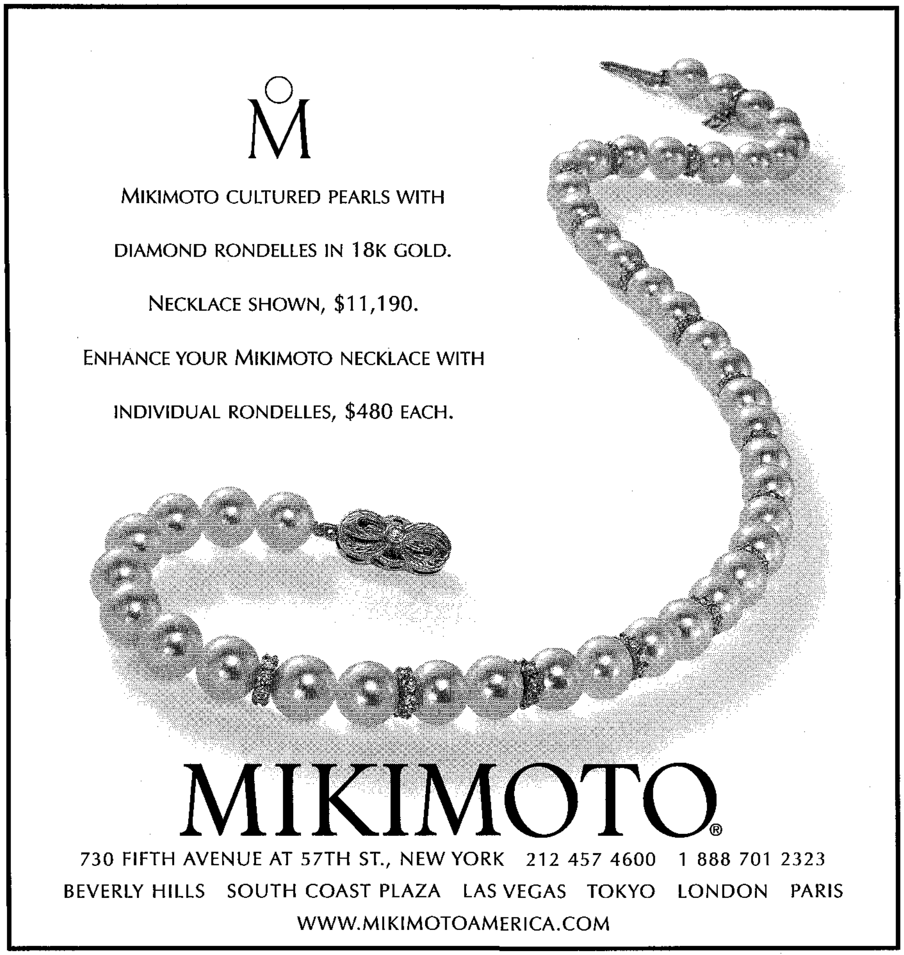
**B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL**
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Feb. 21-22: **Dr. John,** whose gruff, back-porch take on R. & B. has been much imitated but never matched.

**BOTTOM LINE**
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—Feb. 12: The club celebrates its twenty-ninth anniversary with **David Johansen and the Harry Smiths** and the **John Hammond** band. Feb. 14: **Betty Buckley.** Feb. 18: Before the sixties became the decade of love, **Lou Christie** (né Lugee Alfredo Giovanni Sacco) had a series of Top 40 hits with such songs as "Two Faces Have I" and "Lightnin' Strikes." He trots out his patented falsetto in celebration of his sixtieth birthday. Feb. 20: Specializing in winsome pop, the Texas-based contemporary Christian band **Sixpence None the Richer** infiltrated secular airwaves with lilting singles that owe more to "Dawson's Creek"-style whimsy than to devotional praise. Feb. 25: "Ribbon of Highway—Endless Skyway" is a tribute to Woody Guthrie, featuring such folks as **Slaid Cleaves, Eliza Gilkyson, Ellis Paul, Sarah Lee Guthrie,** and **Johnny Irion.**

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Feb. 18: **Dar Williams** is a clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter. Feb. 19-20: The au-courant synth pop of **Ladytron.**

**FEZ**
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—Feb. 12 and Feb. 14-15: The keyboardist Joe McGinty convenes the **Loser's Lounge** to reflect on the music of the Bee Gees. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

**MAKOR**
35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000)—Feb. 13: **Yoke** is a gang of young Russian émigrés with profound sympathies for showmanship, Slavic folk music, rock and roll, and even Jamaican rapping. Sharing the bill is the Brooklyn-based art-rock ensemble **Barbez.**



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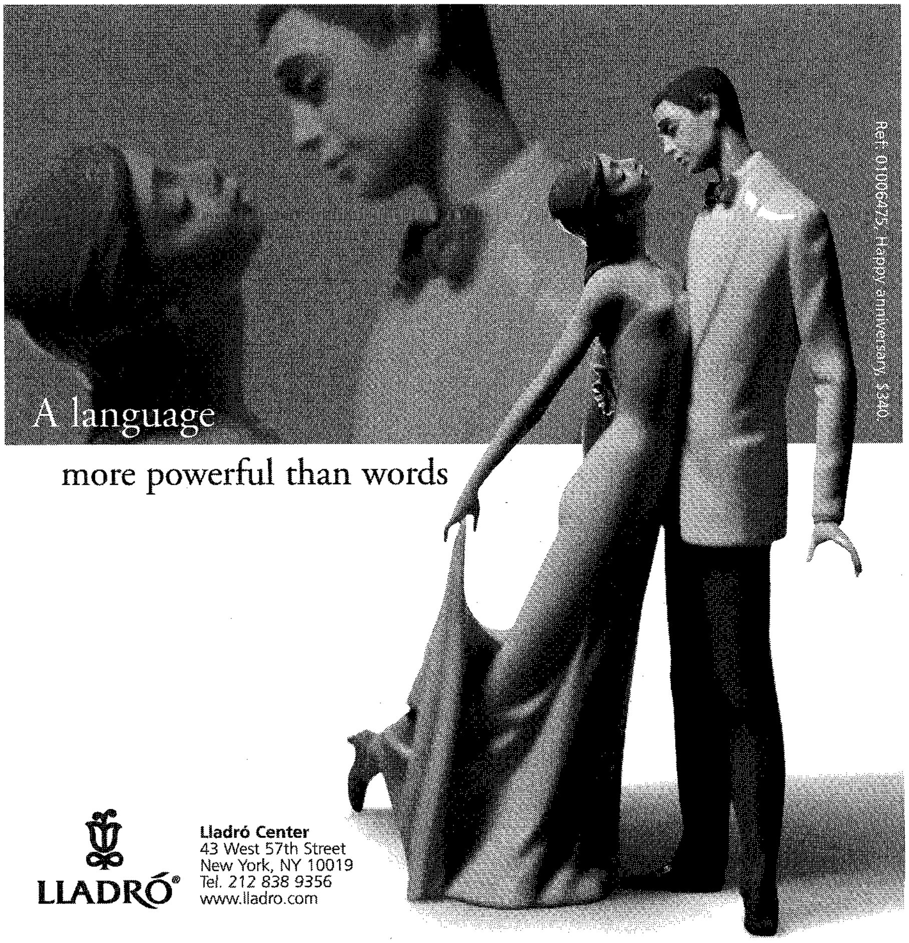

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## POP NOTES

**MOTOR CITY MANIACS**

Eminem may be the king of the world, but it's Detroit's other critical darlings, the White Stripes, who have had a greater impact on the city's musical destiny. Thanks to the White Stripes, whose fourth album, "Elephant," is due this April, a number of other Detroit rock bands have begun to garner national attention, and while many of the acts share certain basic characteristics—most notably, a tough guitar-based sound—there are plenty of interesting variations on this theme.

While the White Stripes rose to fame on Jack White's skill as a songwriter, other Detroit acts are conservationists. The Detroit Cobras are the strongest of the bunch: fronted by Rachel Nagy, whose vocals can be slippery one minute and steely the next, the band puts its stamp on old rock and soul numbers. **"Life Love & Leaving"** (Sympathy for the Record Industry) opens with a roaring version of Mickey Lee Lane's obscure 1965 side "Hey Sah-Lo-Ney" (here retitled "Hey Sailor"), closes with Otis Redding's "Shout Bama Lama," and rarely slows down in the middle, although when it does—as on a stately remake of Mary Wells' "Bye Bye Baby"—the results are gripping. Another powerful Detroit vocalist, Mick Collins, has charted a parallel course with his band the Dirtbombs, whose **"Ultraglide in Black"** (In the Red) features impressively muscular versions of songs made famous by soul stars such as Sly Stone, Stevie Wonder, and Curtis Mayfield. The colorful, quotable Detroit mayor Coleman Young once said, "You can't look forward and backward at the same time." Apparently, he didn't buy many records.

Slightly more modish are the Gore Gore Girls, an all-female trio that fuses garage riffs with the girl-group vocals of Motown. **"Up All Night"** (Get Hip) has energy and style but spotty songwriting, and by the end of the band's short début you have a sneaking suspicion that they may be no more than a novelty act. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the Hentchmen, relatively grizzled vets (they formed way back in 1992) who named themselves after a Detroit garage band of the sixties. **"Three Times Infinity"** (Norton) finds today's Hentchmen tearing their way through a dozen specimens of archetypal, atavistic rock, sounding as if they were possessed by the ghost of the Sonics.

—*Ben Greenman*

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**SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY**

360 W. 53rd St. (212-765-6299)—This garden-level watering hole has no doorman outside, no velvet rope, and no sign. The only indication that you are at the right place is a small green lamp. The long and narrow space is minimally decorated (with sculpturally displayed photographs and a skeletal sculpture), but the attentiveness of the staff and such luxe touches as fresh flowers (which belie the associations that are brought to mind by its name) make it the perfect place for a short romantic stay.

**SOUTHPAW**

125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Feb. 21: The fragile sounds of **Damon & Naomi.** With **Devendra Banhart,** a bearded and gentle young singer-songwriter with an endearing, wavery voice.

**STINGER CLUB**

241 Grand St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-218-6662)—**Lizzie West,** an up-and-coming singer-songwriter who takes her inspiration from Walt Whitman, once crossed the country on a pilgrimage, seeking Leonard Cohen. She found him, and her earthy voice and intense determination (along with a dash of New Age spirituality) brought her a major-label record deal. She's here Fridays through the end of the month.

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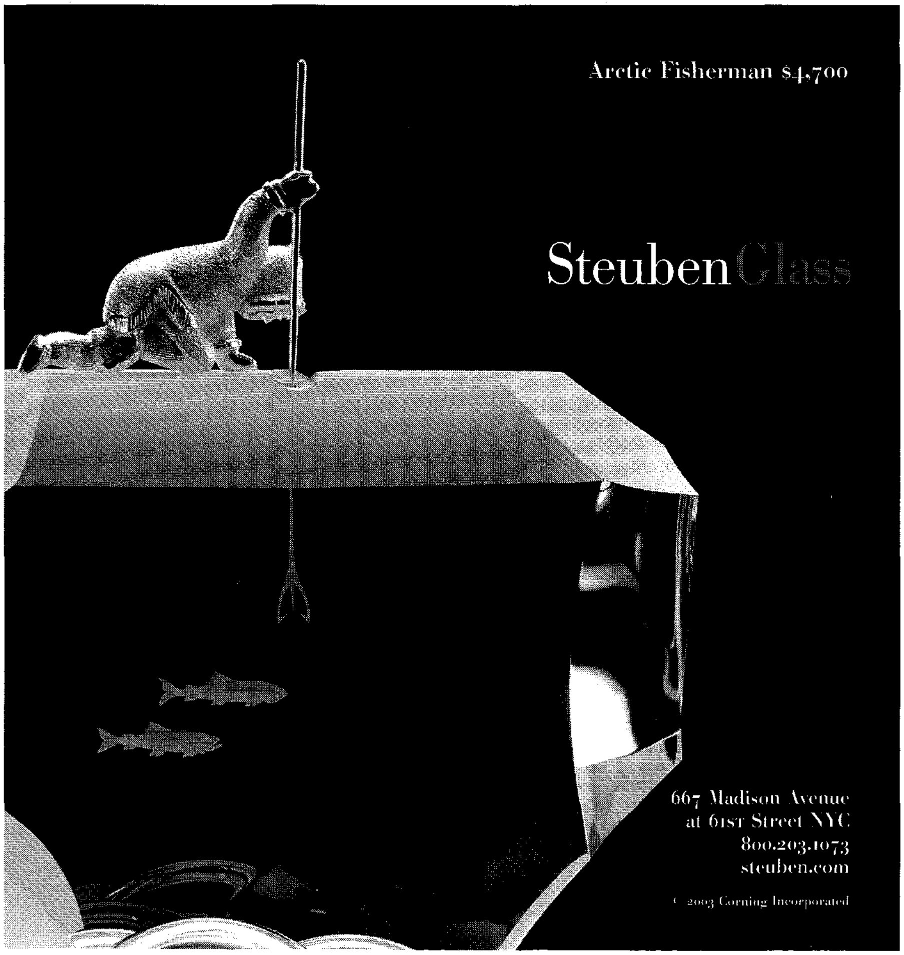


**VILLAGE UNDERGROUND**
130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745)—Feb. 14: The underground rocker **Ted Leo** celebrates the release of his new album, "Hearts of Oak." Feb. 20: Like the mutant children of Motley Crüe and Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, the local girls in **Candy Ass** believe that the sartorial and tonsorial aesthetics of punk rock and heavy metal should be amplified to the highest possible degree. Their music, similarly, brings the sonic clichés from both genres well to the fore.

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL**
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through March 8: A new generation may now have its very own Harry Connick, Jr., in the nineteen-year-old pianist and singer **Peter Cincotti.** Dining.

**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Feb. 12-15: Instrumental virtuosos aren't always a serious lot; **James Moody** spins out warped one-liners and surrealist anecdotes as easily as he does serpentine bebop lines on the saxophone and flute. On the 14th he's joined by the Manhattan Transfer vocalist **Janis Siegel.** Feb. 20-22: The **Craig Handy** quintet. Among the most gifted of the host of spry tenor saxophonists that exploded onto the scene in the nineties, Handy has continued to spread his net wide, grabbing the attention of Herbie Hancock and Steve Coleman, among others.

**FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY**
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through Feb. 15: The singer and guitarist **Kenny Rankin** has successfully reinvented himself as a gifted stylist, equally at home with both classic and pop standards.

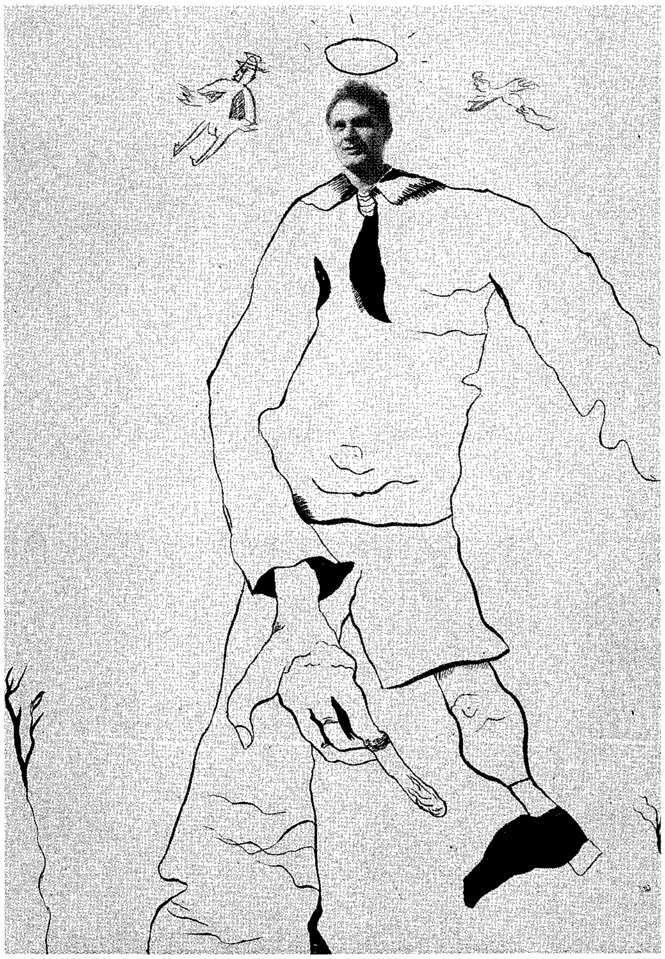
**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Feb. 11-13: The oh-so-subtle singer **Shirley Horn.** Feb. 14-16: Judging from the tribulations chronicled in her autobiography, "High Times, Hard Times," it's a minor miracle that **Anita O'Day** is still with us in her late eighties, let alone performing. A vocal paragon of both the swing era and the cool-jazz fifties and a full-time survivor, O'Day stands tall as a certified living legend. Feb. 18-23: Of the three trumpet masters being fêted at the star-studded tribute to Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, and Booker Little, only Hubbard is still among us. The potent horn section here includes **Nicholas Payton, Tom Harrell, Randy Brecker, Terrell Stafford,** and **David Weiss.** Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

**JAZZ STANDARD**
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Feb. 13-16: Diana Krall and Norah Jones may get the sales, but **Cassandra Wilson's** got the goods. With her crème-brûlée tone, a repertoire that takes in an informed lifetime of listening, and phrasing that respects no rhythmic boundaries, this ingenious singer looks to be an artist for the ages. Feb. 18-23: A week of blues music with, in order of appearance, New Jersey's **Fins,** the keyboardist **Mitch Woods,** and **Lucky Peterson,** on the final three nights. Dining.

**NEUE GALERIE**
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200, ext. 107)—Cabaret performances return to this uptown temple of German art with the actress and Fassbinder collaborator **Hanna Schygulla** on Feb. 14. Starting the following Friday, the vocalist **Lorinda Lisitza** celebrates the life and songs of the actress Lotte Lenya, Kurt Weill's wife and muse.

**SWEET RHYTHM**
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Feb. 19-20: The **Vijay Iyer** quartet. Don't go looking for bop licks from this restlessly inventive pianist and composer: he's devising a rigorous dialect of his own, one that he speaks fluently with bandmate **Rudresh Mahanthappa,** a fierce alto saxophonist with his own fresh ideas.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Feb. 16: The title of the **Bad Plus Trio's** new album proclaims "These Are the Vistas," and for the band's members the long view includes a slam-bang attack on still-revered jazz practices. So if this piano trio wants to play as loud as a rock band, cover tunes by Nirvana and Blondie, and generally display the kind of off-the-wall abandon that usually draws sneers at jazz clubs, well, let 'em rip. With the pianist Ethan Iverson at the helm, the redoubtable Reid Anderson on bass, and the gracefully pile-driving drummer Dave King, these bad boys have the musicianship to back up their attitude. Feb. 18-23: **Mark Turner,** a tenor saxophonist with an unlikely blend of influences, from cool school to sixties expressionist, and his trio. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.



*"Stephen Spender, 1940," by Lucien Freud, at Marks.*

## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The staggering riches of **"Leonardo da Vinci, Master Draftsman"** make it clear that art was an expedient profession for a man of boundless drives. In all fields, he anticipated what unknown things, once they became known, would probably look like. His aesthetic research went straight to ultimate effects of sublime beauty—but strangely, he seemed to have no personal use for it. One is struck by the contrasting human warmth of drawings by Leonardo's teacher Andrea del Verrocchio and by some of his pupils and other followers. Leonardo wasn't exactly cold, but something more intimidating: indifferent. (Add modern irony to his temperament, and he would be Marcel Duchamp.) His strangulated heart found grisly relief in contemplating war, natural disasters, and the grotesque. Through March 30. ♦ A retrospective of the works of the German photographer Thomas Struth. Through May 18. ♦ **"African-American Artists, 1929-1945."** Through May 4. ♦ **"The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353."** Through Feb. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

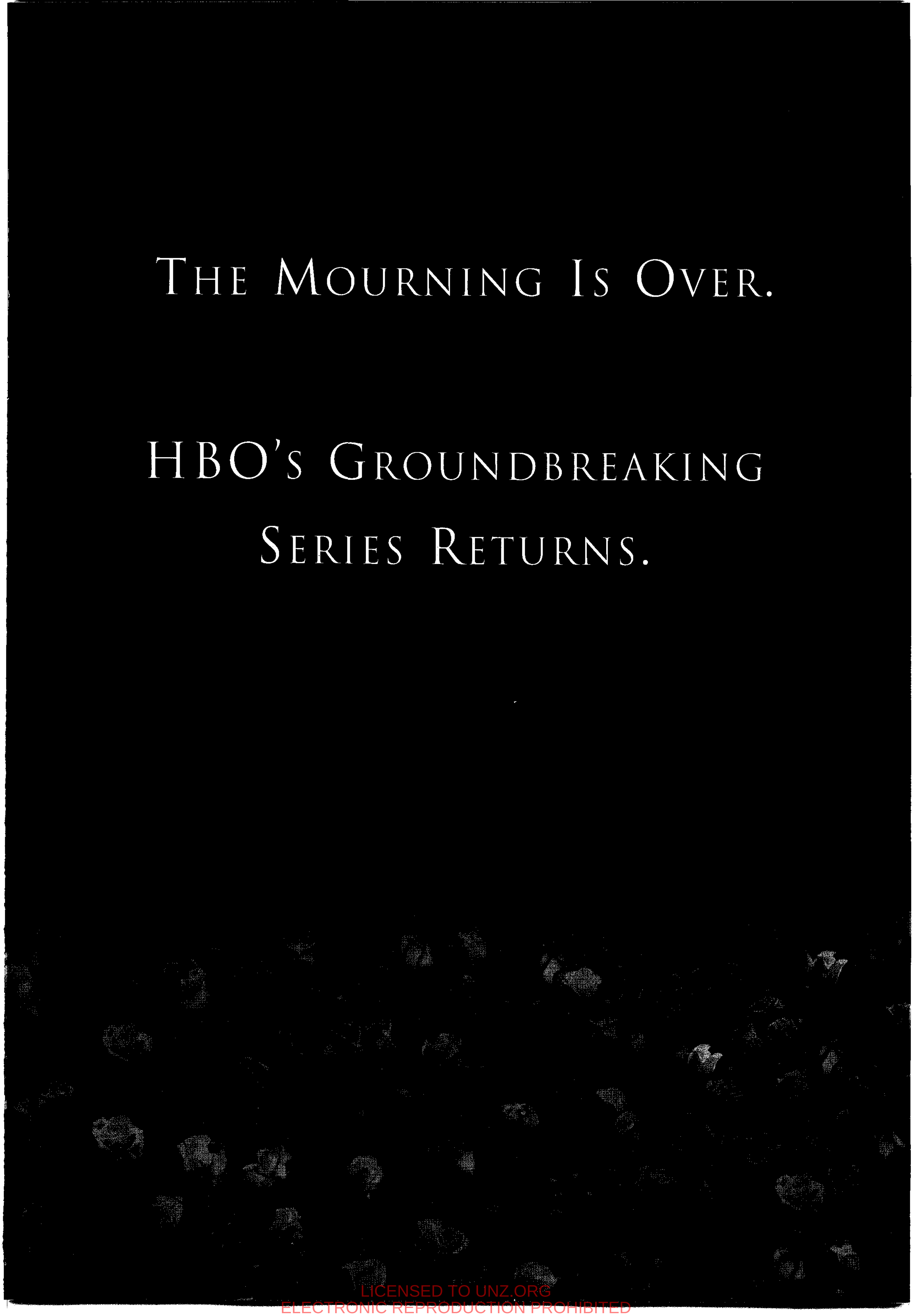
**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)**
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Masterworks of German Expressionism"** presents twenty prints by members of the Brücke group, including Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, and Max Pechstein, as well as artists working between the World Wars, such as Max Beckmann and Käthe Kollwitz. Through Feb. 24. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—Pierre Huyghe, the winner of this year's Hugo Boss Prize, makes a fine opening act for the museum's upcoming Matthew Barney show; both artists are obsessed with spectacle and cinema. Huyghe's two works here—a light sculpture and a film projection—were not created as counterparts, but with their duplicate flashing lights and swirling mist they play off each other beautifully. In the film, the windows of two forlorn apartment towers blink on and off in a snowstorm as if frantically sending a secret signal. In the sculpture, colored lights flash from a suspended white box onto another directly below that oozes smoke. Both suggest an arena-rock light-show version of a "Close Encounters"-style alien contact. Through May 4. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—Sixty-nine hand-sewn quilts, dating from the thirties to the present and incorporating a wild variety of geometries, colors, and fabrics, are on view in **"The Quilts of Gee's Bend."** Through March 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM AT ALTRIA**
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (212-878-2550)—The artist Ellen Harvey has painted three hundred and ninety-four reproductions of works from the Whitney's permanent collection directly onto the walls of a specially constructed gallery within the gallery. Seven recent acquisitions, including an anamorphic skull sculpture by Robert Lazzarini and a gloppy Jim Shaw painting, are visible through small squares cut in the new walls (these works are installed in the "real" gallery), a nifty inversion of museum protocol wherein works of art are on display and catalogued inventory is stashed behind the scenes. It's all great fun, especially Harvey's paintings of paintings, from Alice Neel's portrait of Warhol to women by de Kooning and Currin. Through April 4. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

**FRICK COLLECTION**
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—One of the few prominent female painters of the Ancien Régime (Marie Antoinette arranged for her to have an apartment in the Louvre), Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744-1818) was rediscovered in 1970, and now she's being touted as "the most gifted and venerable still-life painter of Louis XVI's reign." Her arrangements of flowers, fruit, and victuals are duly impressive, but also frus-



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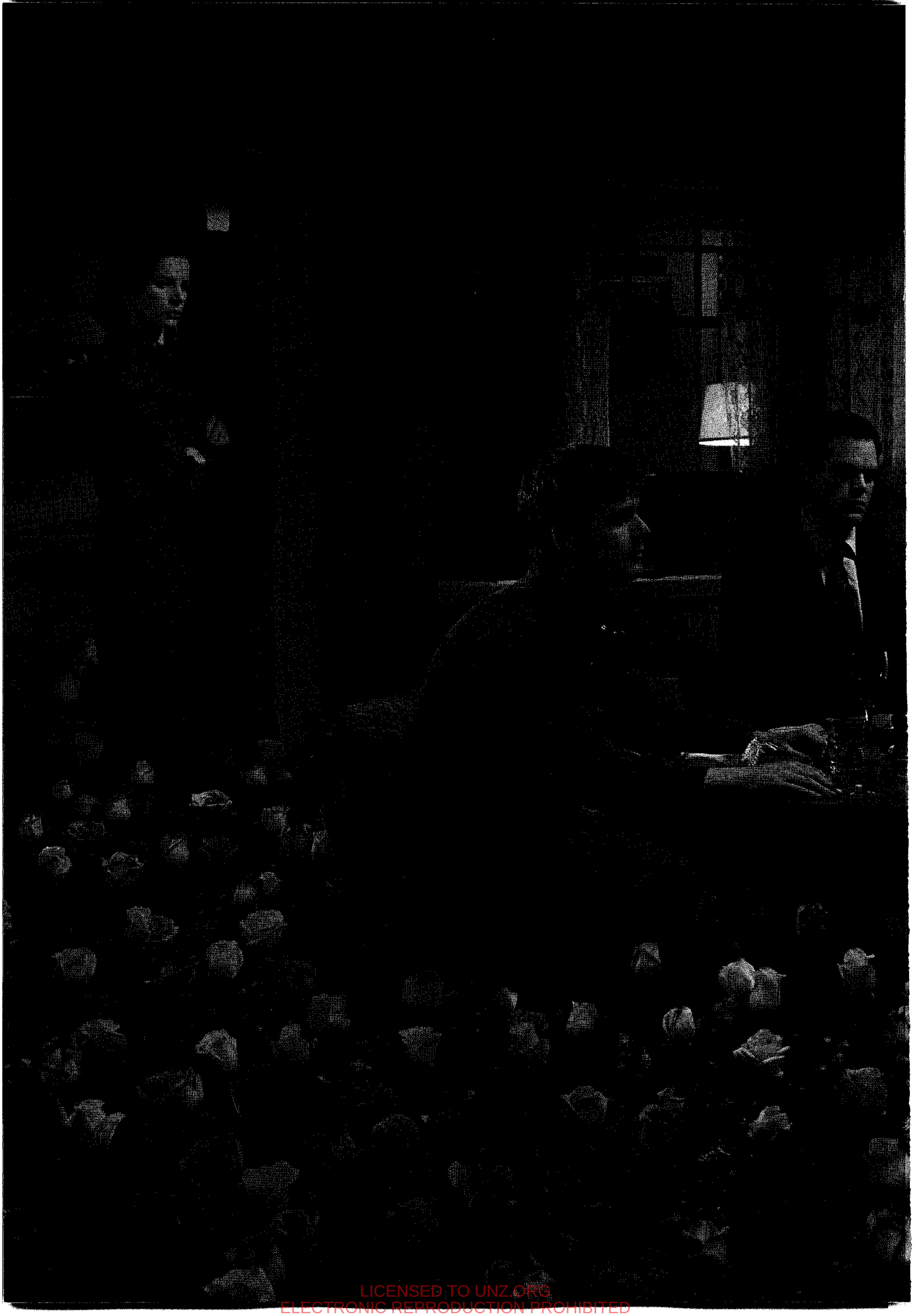

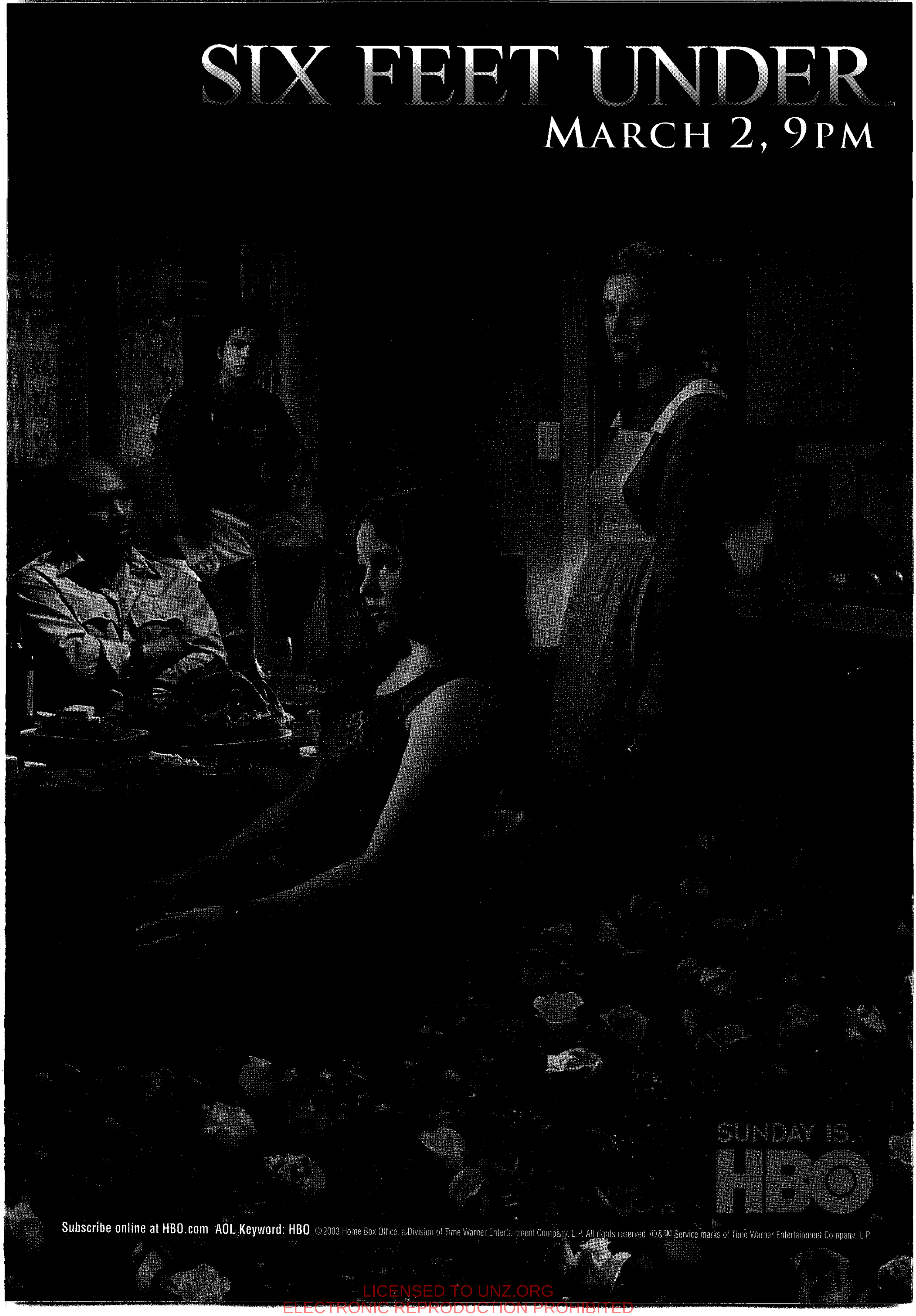
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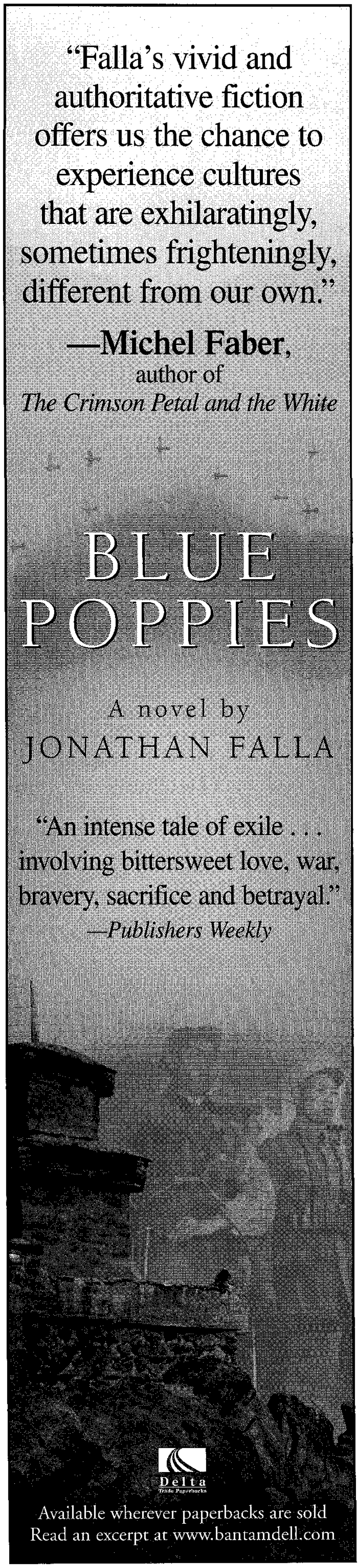

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tratingly prim and dim—almost literally overshadowed by Chardin. The show's breakout painting is an odd, lovely arrangement of coral fronds and seashells. One wishes Vallayer-Coster had spent more time beachcombing. Through March 23. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

## GALLERIES–UPTOWN

*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.*

**JAMES LEE BYARS**
The late spiritualist dandy from Detroit is one of those American icons, like Jerry Lewis, who embarrass the home folks while going over big in Europe. His investments of minimalist form with cosmic messages in expensive materials can be pretty resistible. But they may age well. "The Moon Books" (1989)—a gold-leafed, round table of six pie-slice parts, more than sixteen feet in diameter and bearing sixteen gilded marble blocks representing phases of the moon—stirs unexpected nostalgia for the top-hatted mystagogue. Its mad confidence, with no conceivable means of support, and extravagant showiness make most current art seem timid and pale. Can there be great bad art? Through March 22. (Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623.)

**LOIS DODD**
Twenty-one homely, luminous paintings of windows and doorways, made from 1971 through 1992, by an underknown New York lyrical realist, whose style might be termed either rougher Alex Katz or woodsier Jane Freilicher. Dodd's summarizing, open brushwork transfigures the woebegone, in exterior details of tumbledown houses in Maine and vernacular window views. An odd quality—call it grand diffidence—attends works that often sacrifice unity to the dignity of small visual truths. When (at least twice in the show) everything clicks, the effect takes one's breath away. Through March 1. (Alexandre, 41 E. 57th St. 212-755-2828.)

**MAY STEVENS**
The seventy-nine-year-old artist who, like her late husband, Rudolph Baranik, used to be driven by inflamed political conscience (anti-war, feminist) has mellowed. Big unstretched canvases display riverine and coastal landscapes in layered acrylic washes, with glowing passages that, on closer examination, turn out to be drifts of illegible handwriting in gold or silver ink. The texts—passages by Virginia Woolf and an oral history of soldiers who, until 1972, manned coastal gun mounts in California—matter if one is interested, but they are extraneous to the work's sombre, immersive beauties. Through March 22. (Mary Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 212-397-0669.)

**ÉDOUARD VUILLARD**
A large, uneven show of the shy French master (1868-1940) is no substitute for the mighty Vuillard retrospective at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. The most covetable items are the drawings, pastels, and oil sketches from Vuillard's glory days of Symbolist figures and Ibsen-tinged interiors. Apart from these—and one great, crusty panel painting from 1913, showing the artist's mother reading a newspaper by windows framing a dazzling city view—the show is overwhelmed by late, weak landscapes and grossly overworked portraits. Still, even failed Vuillard has a certain something. Through March 8. (Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 212-744-2300.)

### *Short List*

**WAYNE THIEBAUD**
Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 212-987-4997.
Through March 19.

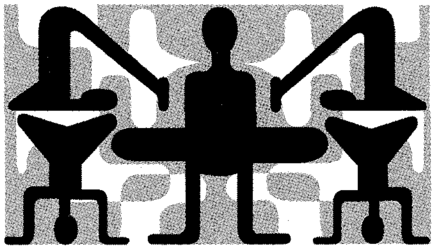
## GALLERIES–CHELSEA

**NINA KATCHADOURIAN**
In settings from Trinidad to Antarctica, Katchadourian performs and photographs strange little eco-

## BOOK CURRENTS

### *Flexible Benefits*

Celebrity yoga has become its own industry, generating magazine covers, fashion lines, and now books. Christy Turlington, the limber supermodel and yoga-clothing designer, ambitiously combines memoir, historical survey, and instruction manual in **LIVING YOGA** (Hyperion). "I discovered that I could be graceful and agile and could hold my balance in challenging poses, both as a model and as a yogi," she writes. Two of Turlington's instructors, Sharon Gannon and David Life, showcase their own form in **THE ART OF YOGA** (Stewart, Tabori & Chang), in which philosophical aphorisms accompany glossy black-and-white photographs of seemingly impossible positions: in Dwi Pada Sirsasana, Life balances on his hands, hovering inches off the floor with ankles crossed neatly behind his head.

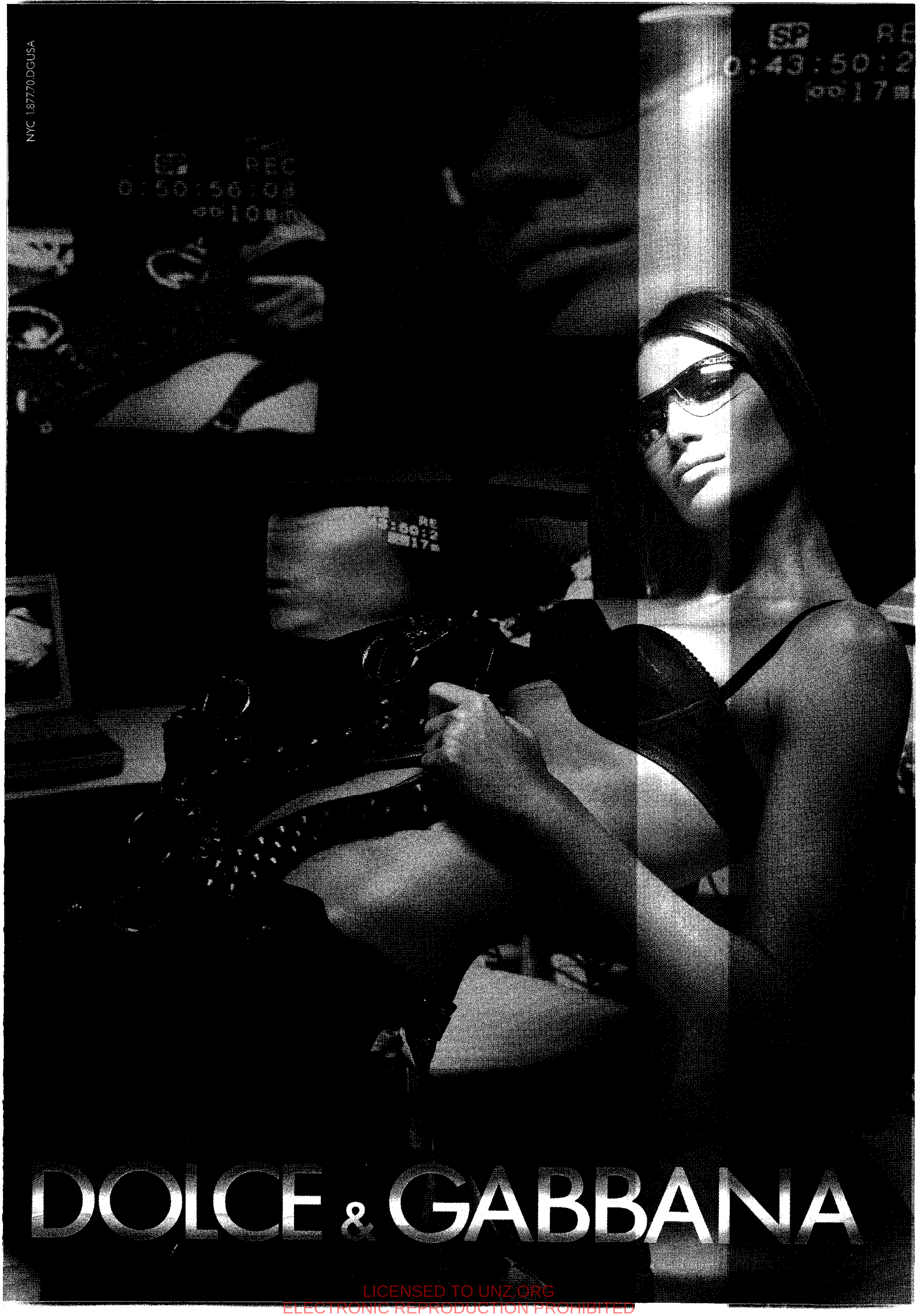


Mariel Hemingway doesn't claim great feats of contortion in her memoir, **FINDING MY BALANCE** (Simon & Schuster), but she credits yoga with sorting out her turbulent life. The suicide of her famous grandfather looms large, along with her mother's cancer, one sister's mental illness, the other's addiction, and Hemingway's own obsessive-compulsive behaviors. She writes, "I no longer feel a helpless victim of my family's strange interactions and flawed genetic pool."

Even nonhuman celebrities have joined the act, albeit with less emphasis on spiritual redemption. Laurent de Brunhoff's **BABAR'S YOGA FOR ELEPHANTS** (Abrams) traces yoga back to prehistoric elephants (who, contrary to human custom, practiced with shoes on). The elephant king and his queen, Celeste, travel the world mimicking man-made structures with their asanas: "The Golden Gate Bridge? Two elephants doing the Cobra."

—*Andrea Thompson*

RICHARD McGUIRE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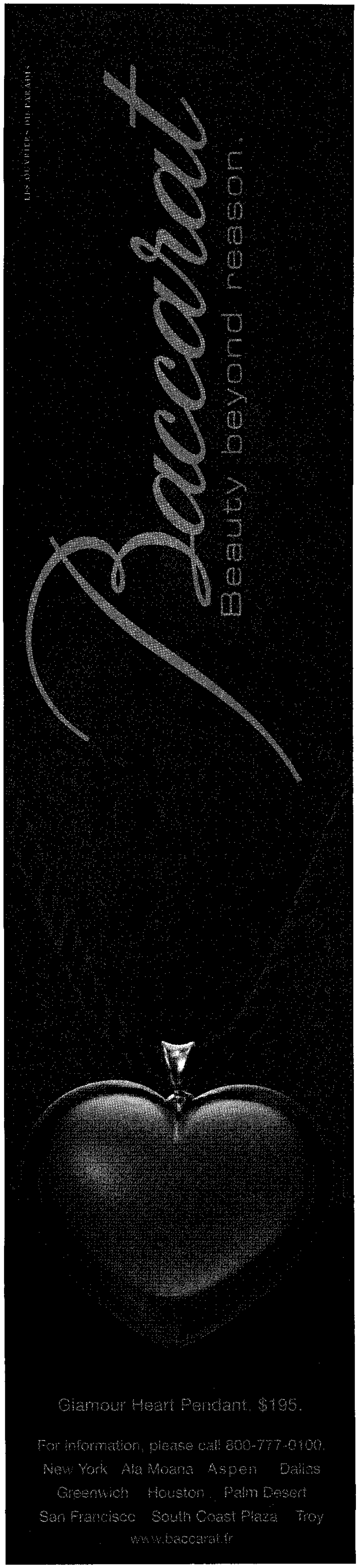
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conceptual pranks. Her materials include caterpillars, barnacles, a snake, a rat, and the artist's own front teeth—onto which, in a video aptly named "Endurance," she projects a tiny ten-minute clip of Shackleton's famous expedition. "Beginning with an optimistic smile," the press release notes, "'Endurance' soon degrades into a painful grimace as the artist salivates uncontrollably and the ship is crushed by pack ice." Closure, when it finally comes, has never looked more satisfying. Through Feb. 22. (Debs, 525 W. 26th St. 212-643-2070.)

**JUDITH SCHAECHTER**
Schaechter's heroines, whether they're retching, wretched, or just bedraggled, are a long way from the kind of feminine iconography one associates with stained glass. Or are they? You could also say that the wall-mounted light boxes connect her contemporary versions of abjection to the tribulations of Christian saints. "Extra Virgin," the show's title, telegraphs Schaechter's sardonic medieval mannerism. Through March 15. (Claire Oliver Fine Arts, 529 W. 20th St. 212-929-5949.)

**"AIR"**
It's hard to imagine a more immaterial premise, but this delightful show transcends its concept. Sure, there's an ampule of atmosphere by Duchamp (included in the "Boîte-en-Valise"), a text by Jenny Holzer, a new work by Janine Antoni, and the inevitable photograph of Yves Klein's "Leap Into the Void." But there's also a painting by Constable, an exquisite whisper of gray clouds, alongside related studies by nineteenth-century masters including Courbet, Blakelock, and Turner. Through Feb. 15. (James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.)

### *Short List*

**LUCIEN FREUD**
Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.
Through April 12.

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

**ERIC HATTAN / ZOE LEONARD**
The artists share a tongue-in-cheek style. Both Hattan's video of an empty paper coffee cup blowing around an asphalt courtyard and Leonard's photographs of plastic bags stuck in trees skewer the pretty but pretentious floating-bag clip from "American Beauty." Other selections notable for their light mockery are two videos: one playing a loop of a city dog's butt waggling along under two heavy layers of designer clothes, the other of the artist's fidgety feet. Through Feb. 15. (Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway. 212-925-2035.)

### *Short List*

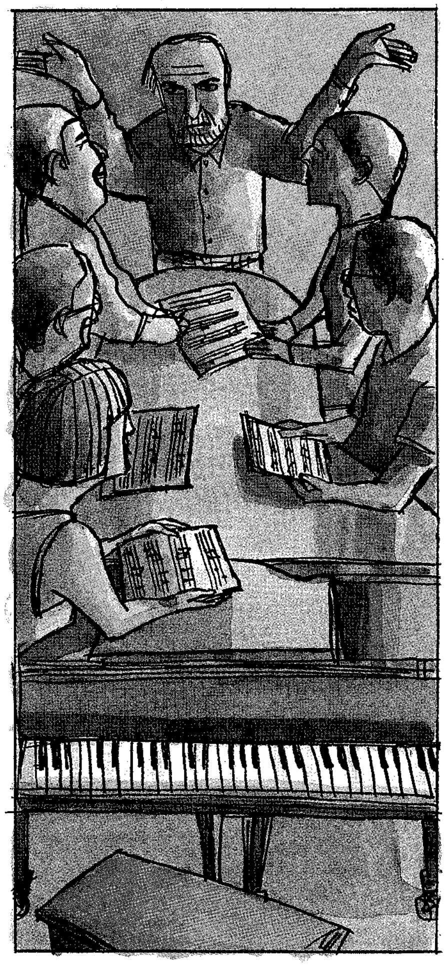
**THOMAS NOZKOWSKI**
New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St.
212-673-6466. Through March 1.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**JOAN FONTCUBERTA**
In his latest show, the Catalan photographer continues to tweak assumptions about truth in photography, this time taking on religious fanaticism. He's invented a secret monastic community in the Finnish wilderness, where initiates master the art of miracles. Monks walk on water (an "easy-to-master classic" according to a typically droll wall label) and weep blood, and faces materialize on slices of ham (Jesus and Osama bin Laden put in appearances, but Ariel Sharon is reportedly impossible to conjure). Through March 8. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 212-752-1223.)

**CHRIS STEELE-PERKINS**
The Beatles are often given credit for fathering England's modern youth subculture, but the Fab Four had a spectacular opening act: the teddy boys, loosely knit gangs of working-class youths united by their love of music, tight jeans, and extravagant, towering hairdos. The teddy-boy look was killed off by the frizzy hair and fringe of the hippies but was resurrected as part of the punk-rock aesthetic. A longtime Magnum photographer, Steele-Perkins captured all the energy and cool insouciance of the latter-day teds, and although it would have been easy to romanticize (or ridicule) the apparent confidence and outlandishness of his subjects, he managed to convey warmth without condescension. Some of the show's most memorable images are among the more sober—a portrait of two young men, their arms looped around each other, is both beautiful and poignant and even their elaborate rolled coiffures look more noble than ridiculous. Through March 15. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. 212-431-0292.)

**ERIC WEEKS**
These pictures stumble through nature with a foreboding sense of calm—two birds nestle on a decaying windowsill, a river races by, and a cobweb just reaches a building from the branches of a nearby tree. The birds and the bugs survive in pairs, but the people in Weeks' color images are very much alone. In "Suspect," a furtive young man lights a cigarette in an empty stairwell, and in "Ritual," a young woman forlornly washes her hands in a bowl held in her lap. Weeks' saturated colors and overheated lighting emphasize his take on innocence and instinct. Through Feb. 22. (Nikolai, 505 W. 22nd St. 212-414-8511.)



*Frederic Rzewski and friends perform the three final "Keyboard Summit" concerts on Feb. 14–16 (see Classical).*

**WILLIAM WEGMAN**
The cuteness of Wegman's weimaraners, regal as they can be, tends to overshadow any conceptual or technical merit in his pictures. But this well-curated show pits rarely seen video work (dogs playing with plastic bottles) and grids of early photographs (of family members or girlfriends) against the more familiar images of the artist's extraordinarily photogenic dogs. The recent work is Wegman's most abstract—even austere—dog work yet. In a few images the dogs become veritable wisps that slip

BEN KATCHOR

out of his camera's view, like a canine version of nineteenth-century spirit photography. A triptych shows a pile of dogs, and just visible in the mess of snouts, haunches, and floppy ears is Wegman's hand, holding it all together. Through March 1. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.)

**"GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY"**
This show is required viewing for those who want to get the most out of the explosion of German work on view in New York City right now. The gallery surveys the most important (and infamous) styles and artists, ranging from Karl Blossfelt, at the turn of the last century, to the Bauhaus, in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, to Bernd and Hilla Becher, today's most influential teachers of photography. There are wonderful surprises, like EVA's 1925 multiply exposed Charleston dancer who flaps around a saxophone player and Marta Hoeppfner's hilarious Expressionistic dreamscape "Sudden Fright." August Sander's portraits of a hotelier, boxers, and schoolgirls ooze provincial pride. Studies of water drops done in the fifties by Peter Keetman are positively psychedelic, and Erich Saloman's monumental "Reichstag Diptych," from 1930, in which Nazi officers buzz around the parliamentary hall, is absolutely arresting. Through March 1. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 212-397-3930.)

### *Short List*

**BERND AND HILLA BECHER**
Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 212-627-1018.
Through Feb. 15.

**ELIZABETH HEYERT**
Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.
Through March 1.

**MICHAEL KENNA**
Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.
Through March 1.

## AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

**SOTHEBY'S**
Feb. 12 at 10:15 A.M.: A sale of Impressionist and modern art that features works by such artists as Klimt, Buffet, Utrillo, Grosz, and Jean Dufy. Sculptures by Archipenko and Arp ("Assis," a bronze miniature estimated to sell for approximately a hundred thousand dollars) are the highlights of the sale. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

**CHRISTIE'S**
Feb. 12 at 10 A.M. and 2: Photographs, including works by Adams, Avedon ("Lewis Alcindor," a 1963 photograph of the basketball player who later changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar), Cunningham, Feininger, Mapplethorpe, and many others. ♦ Feb. 13 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of prints, offered at moderate prices, that includes works by such artists as Arp, Braque, Picasso, Porter ("Girl in the Woods," from 1971), and Warhol. ♦ Feb. 25 at 10 A.M.: A selection of scientific books from the collection of the Illinois Institute of Technology. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

**DOYLE**
Feb. 19 at 10 A.M.: "Belle Époque," an auction of furniture, decorations, and paintings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including lamps from Tiffany Studios, porcelain by Meissen and Sèvres, and much else. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

**SWANN**
Feb. 13 at 10:30 A.M.: Books on travel and exploration, including such volumes as a first edition (ca. 1856) of Sir Richard Burton's "Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah." (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

**THE ART SHOW**
The prestigious annual show returns, with seventy of the country's leading dealers and galleries (including Berry-Hill, Pace Wildenstein, Barbara Gladstone, and Galerie St. Etienne) offering a range of paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, and prints (by such artists as Barney, Schiele, Homer, and Kahlo). (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. 212-940-8925. Feb. 20-24.)

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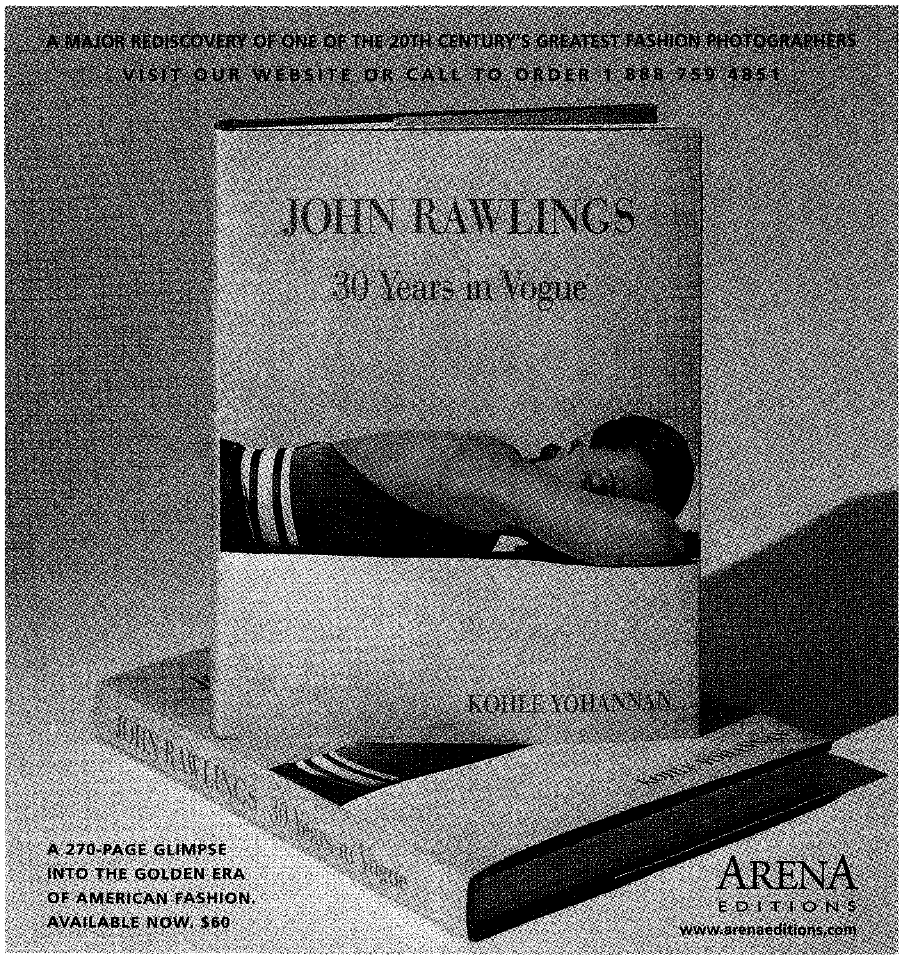

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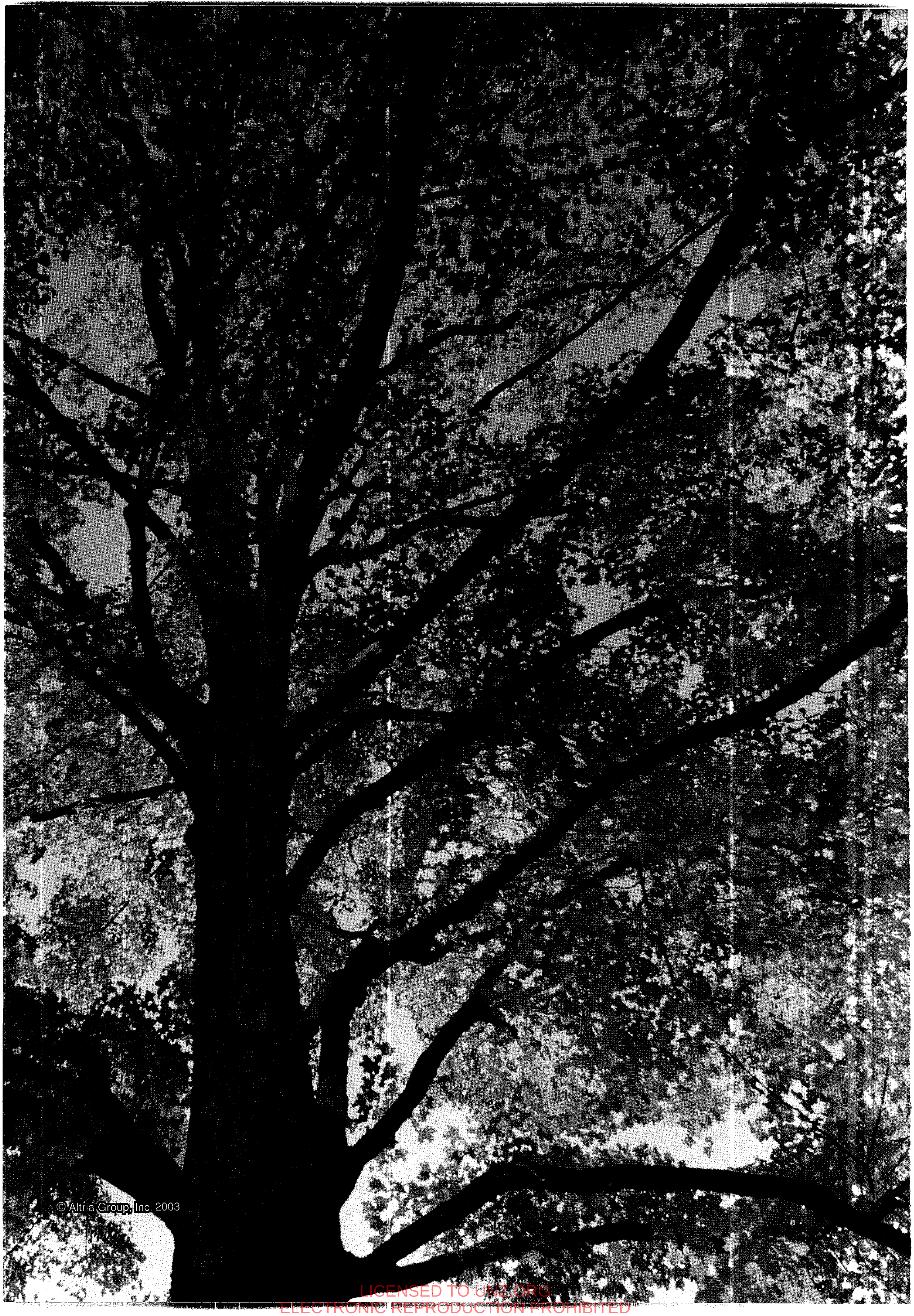

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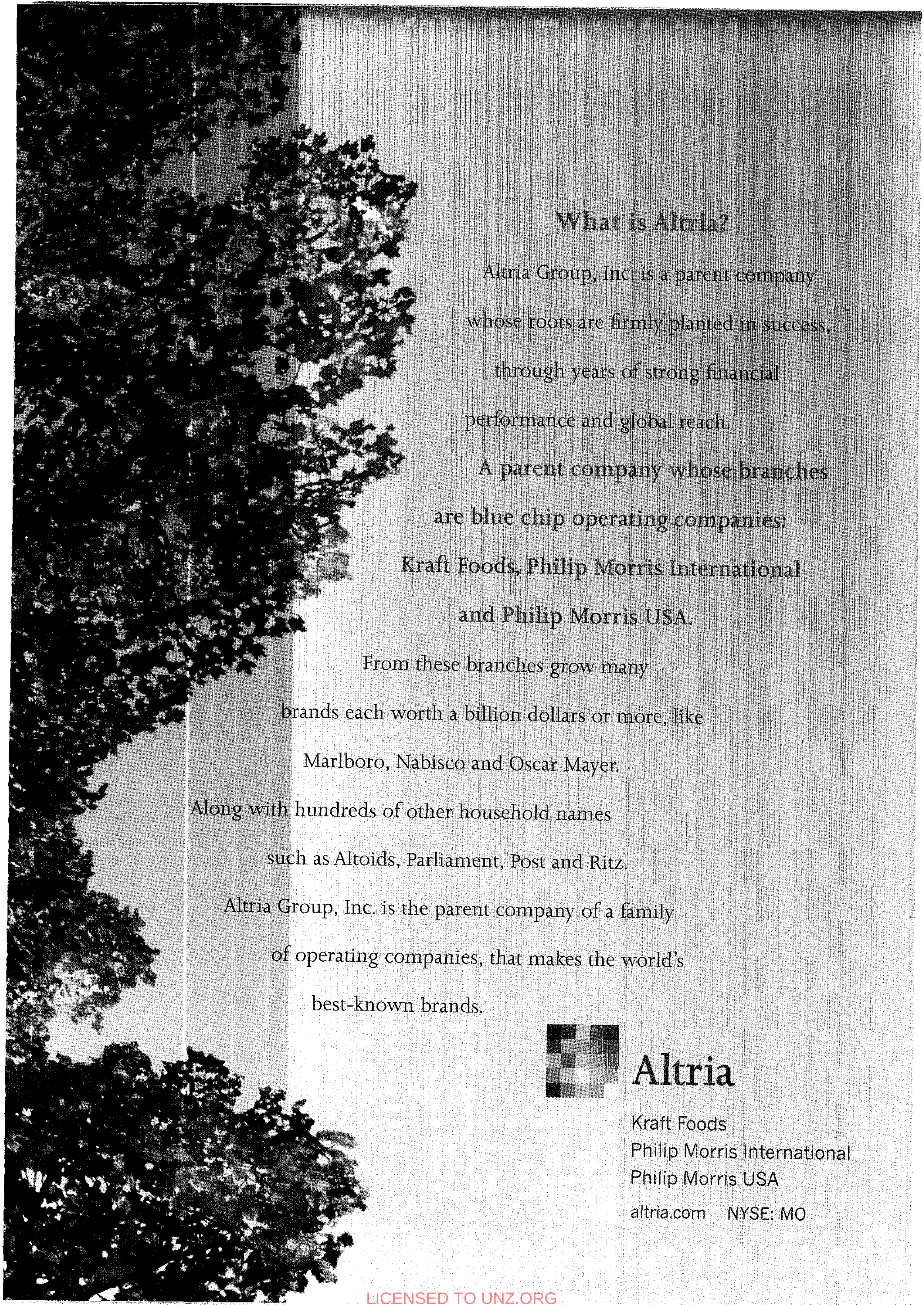

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### GRAMERCY PARK ANTIQUES AND FINE ART FAIR

This show of furniture, art works, and decorative objects from around the world returns for its fourth season, with a special accent on things French. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 26th St. 212-255-0020. Feb. 14-16.)

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# CLASSICAL MUSIC

## OPERA

### METROPOLITAN OPERA

The final performances this season of **"Il Trovatore,"** with Marina Mescheriakova, Irina Mishura, Franco Farina, Roberto Frontali, and Dmitri Kavrakos; Frédéric Chaslin conducts. (Feb. 12 at 7:30 and Feb. 15 at 8:30.) ♦ With Francisco Casanova replacing Farina. (Feb. 18 and Feb. 21 at 8.) ♦ Olivier Tambosi's new production of **"Jenůfa,"** with Karita Mattila, Rosalind Plowright (making her début, as Jenůfa's frightening stepmother, Kostelnička), Richard Berkeley-Steele (in another début), and Adam Klein. (Feb. 13 at 8. This is the final performance.) ♦ The Met's new production of **"Les Troyens,"** conceived in a time of economic plenty, now seems like a dangerous extravagance. Unlike every other French opera of its time, this five-act leviathan (originally produced in a slashed-up three-act version in 1863) summons up a world: that of Virgil's Aeneid, with the fall of Troy and the doomed love of Dido and Aeneas. Deborah Voigt and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, in the roles of Cassandra and Dido, respectively, and Ben Heppner lead an impressive cast that also includes Dwayne Croft, Robert Lloyd, Elena Zaremba, and Matthew Polenzani. The director Francesca Zambello refashions the composer's elaborate mise en scène of warriors, palaces, gods, and nymphs; the composer's magical orchestration lies in the capable hands of James Levine. (Feb. 14 and Feb. 17 at 6:30 and Feb. 22 at 12:30.) ♦ **"Don Giovanni,"** with Sondra Radvanovsky, Melanie Diener, Anna Netrebko, Peter Mattei (in the title role), Rainer Trost, Ferruccio Furlanetto, Patrick Carfizzi, and Eric Halfvarson (as the Commendatore); Sylvain Cambreling conducts. (Feb. 15 at 1:30. This is the final performance.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** the first in a series of popular Zeffirelli productions to return to the house this month, features a cast that includes Elena Kelessidi (in her début, as Mimì), Ainhoa Arteta, Ramón Vargas, and Vassily Gerello; Marcello Viotti. (Feb. 19 at 8 and Feb. 22 at 8:30.) ♦ Zeffirelli's **"Turandot,"** once criticized for its gaudy portrayal of imperial Peking, has long since proved a credit to the house: it provides an accessible glamour that can dazzle an audience way up into the cheap seats. It helps, of course, that Puccini's opera, monumental even in its intimate moments, is an indestructible vehicle for powerhouse voices, which in this performance belong to Adrienne Dugger (in the title role), Norah Amsellem, Richard Margison, and Robert Lloyd; Marco Armiliato. (Feb. 24 at 8.) ♦ For **"La Traviata,"** Zeffirelli scales down the usually elephantine grandeur of his décor to a restrained, upper-middle-class elegance—something that suits the opera's social conflicts and nervous splendor. Ruth Ann Swenson, Frank Lopardo, and Lado Ataneli (making his début) lead the cast; Bertrand de Billy. (Feb. 25 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

### AMATO OPERA

This feisty little company's jewel-box theatre (a monument of the Lower East Side) might be just the place to take in a performance of **"Così Fan Tutte,"** the most intimate and emotionally complex of Mozart's operas. Anthony Amato conducts. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. Feb. 22 at 7:30 and Feb. 23 at 2:30. Through March 23.)

*"Sudden Fright," from 1935, by Marta Hoeppfner, at Laurence Miller (see Photography).*

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## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

### NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

In one of its big contributions to the Berlioz centenary, the Philharmonic brings in Charles Dutoit to lead a single performance of the composer's Requiem, a work that expands the liturgical rite to epic proportions (it requires an additional percussion section and four brass bands) and invests it with a full measure of Romantic emotion. Paul Groves is the tenor soloist; the Westminster Symphonic Choir assists. (Feb. 14 at 8.) ♦ Nino Rota's Concerto for Strings, begins a light program of symphonies by Haydn (the "Surprise") and Tchaikovsky (the "Polish"). (Feb. 19-20 at 7:30 and Feb. 21-22 at 8.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

### EOS ORCHESTRA

For its season opener, Jonathan Sheffer's edgy ensemble turns to some familiar territory—music by Copland (including "Appalachian Spring") and Bowles. (Concert Hall, Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 212-691-6415. Feb. 13 at 8.)

### ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Charles Neidich is the guest for a concert of Ives (the Third Symphony), Ginastera, Villa-Lobos, and Copland (the brilliant, difficult, and rarely performed original version of the Clarinet Concerto). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 15 at 8.)

### CZECH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

This ensemble, founded during the heady days of the Czech musical revival (Dvořák conducted its first concert, in 1896), is renowned for its stylistically authentic performances of the classic Czech repertory, but its upcoming Carnegie Hall concerts will focus exclusively on the music of Soviet Russia—a body of work that its present music director, Vladimir Ashkenazy (who grew up there during Stalin's Reign of Terror), knows first hand. Feb. 20 at 8: A virtually all-Shostakovich program mixes favorite concert works (including the Chamber Symphony, Op. 110a, an arrangement of the Eighth Quartet) with "Antiformalist Rayok," a politically satirical cantata never performed during the composer's lifetime, and an excerpt from his score for "The Fall of Berlin," played concurrently with a screening of the actual film sequence. An excerpt from Prokofiev's score for Eisenstein's film "Ivan the Terrible" is also included. The pianist Lukáš Vondráček, the bass Peter Mikuláš, the Dessoff Choirs, and the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York assist. ♦ Feb. 22 at 8: The same forces (along with the cellist Steven Isserlis) join the orchestra for three works that illustrate the public predicament of the Soviet composer—Prokofiev's "Hail to Stalin" (sophisticated agitprop), Kabalevsky's Cello Concerto No. 2 (an unusually private, dark-hued piece from an officially approved composer), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13, "Babi Yar" (an implicit criticism of the Soviet regime). The Shostakovich performance will be preceded by a reading of the work's controversial texts by their author, Yevgeny Yevtushenko. ♦ Feb. 23 at 3: The series concludes with another program of Shostakovich (the First Violin Concerto, with Vadim Repin) and Prokofiev (the Symphony No. 6 in E-Flat Minor). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

### BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC: "AMERICAN LOLLAPALOOZA"

Like many of the music programs that fill the halls at BAM, Kristjan Järvi's rock-inflected concert is not quite as cutting edge as it sounds—the composers (with one exception) range from famous fortysomethings to a prominent senior citizen. But it's still a strong list: there'll be works by Reich, Adams, Kernis (the ethereal "Musica Celestis"), Daugherty, Daniel Schnyder (the New York première of the Swiss composer-saxophonist's "Hymn for a New Generation"), and John Mackey (the world première of "Redline Tango"). And Järvi, the youngest member of the Estonian-American conducting clan, leads this music with flair. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Feb. 21-22 at 8.)

### "BACH VARIATIONS": FREIBURG BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Lincoln Center hosts a series of concerts by top-notch early-music ensembles that show off a variety of performing styles—and that take some off-center looks at Bach's iconic masterpieces. The first program, given by the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and the mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink, may be on the conservative side—two concertos and a cantata (BWV 170, "Vergnügte Ruh', beliebte Seelenlust"), with a bit of Handel mixed in—but the orchestra will be back in March to accompany a choreographic version of "The Art of Fugue." (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Feb. 23 at 2.)

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## RECITALS

### CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Feb. 12 at 8: The Miró String Quartet spikes a concert of Schubert and Dvořák with a dash of George Crumb ("Black Angels" for electrified quartet, a spooky nineteen-seventies classic). ♦ Feb. 16 at 5 and Feb. 18 at 7:30: The renowned Ensemble Wien-Berlin, celebrating its twentieth-anniversary year, arrives for a program of Beethoven, Janáček ("Youth,"), Reicha, and Poulenc. ♦ Feb. 23 at 5: Pinchas Zukerman picks up his viola to join the Orion String Quartet in Dvořák's String Quintet in E-Flat Major. Music by Haydn and Harbison (the New York première of his Fourth Quartet) completes the program. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788.)

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## TABLES FOR TWO

**CASA**

72 Bedford St. (212-366-9410)—This Casa is not *su casa.* First of all, it's Portuguese for home, not Spanish, so certain things are different. According to the owner, Jupira Lee, a first-generation Korean-Brazilian who has lived here for thirteen years, home is where you eat typical Brazilian food—because you have maids. "Like in the morning, you wake up, around ten-thirty, eleven o'clock?" she says. "You always smell beans cooking. It's one of the things you miss."

There are no bright subtropical touches at Casa to lure the crowds; the candlelit corner restaurant fits right in with all the other nineteenth-century houses down this quiet Village street. Still, passersby can take one look through the latticed windows and recognize a distinctly sunny plantation atmosphere. The small place is often comfortably crowded with a mix of Villagers and Brazilian expats.

The appetizers address the crowding problem: several of them make for ideal finger food during the wait at the bar—the *salgadinhos*, fried shrimp, chicken, or cheese pastries that come with a fresh and wicked jalapeño dip, or the *frango à passarinho*, garlicky chicken nibbles on the bone. Some patrons will insist on having wine or beer to go with them—both are on the menu—but a better choice is the *caipirinha*, a worldly cousin of the margarita that uses *cachaça* in place of tequila and is served with fresh mint. Have five.

The menu acts as a summary of regional fare. The meatloafy shrimp cake is a São Paulo specialty; the seafood *moqueca* with squid, shrimp, and fish has Afro-Brazilian touches like coconut milk and *dendê* oil typical of Bahia; the chicken with garlic, tomato, and okra is straight from Minas Gerais. Like the *feijoada*, a bean-and-dried-beef dish that comes with a platter of fresh orange, rice, collard greens, and the toasted manioc grain called *farofa*, these hearty platters are deceptively light. And who is it who pulls off these marvels? "My chef is a woman from Minas Gerais," Lee says. "Her name is Maria, Dona Maria." And her last name? "I don't know. She's Dona Maria. It's the name of a good cook." (Open Mondays through Saturdays for dinner. Entrées $15.95-$19.95.)

—*Kevin Conley*

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**QUEEN'S CHAMBER BAND**

The soprano Julianne Baird joins the early-music group for its annual Italian concert, a program of vocal and instrumental works by Vivaldi, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, and Handel. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Feb. 12 at 8.)

**AVIAN ORCHESTRA**

The new contemporary-music ensemble performs a pheromone-laced lineup of music about love and lust by Conrad Cummings ("Positions 1956"), Virgil Thomson (the surprisingly naughty "Feast of Love," with the baritone Chris Pedro Trakas), and Peter Flint. As an entr'acte, the burlesque dancer Dirty Martini performs her reconstruction of Sally Rand's legendary fan dance to Debussy's "Claire de Lune." (Bill Young Studio, 100 Grand St. Feb. 13-14 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

**BARGEMUSIC**

The Fine Arts Quartet (with the violist Toby Hoffman) settles in for the weekend to perform all six of Mozart's string quintets. Feb. 13-14 at 7:30: The Quintets Nos. 1, 3, and 5. ♦ Feb. 15 at 7:30 and Feb. 16 at 4: The Quintets Nos. 2, 4, and 6. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

**"SOLO FLIGHTS: KEYBOARD SUMMIT"**

Frederic Rzewski, the politically and musically rebellious American composer who has long lived in Brussels, completes his two-week stopover in New York to perform the première of his eight-hour "novel for the piano," "The Road." The work is the culmination of nearly a decade of effort, and resounds with whistles, singing, and a driving dynamism—it can shift from angular to lyrical in barely a bar. (These final concerts, presented by the Kitchen, span Parts VI-VIII.) Rzewski shares the concerts with three very different (though all spiritually sympathetic) guest pianists, Guy Livingston, Eleanor Sandresky, and Jed Distler, all of whom perform a program of their own. (West Park Presbyterian Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 86th St. 212-255-5793. Feb. 14-15 at 7 and 9 and Feb. 16 at 4 and 6.)

**MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Feb. 14 at 8: The extravagant Lauren Flanigan, City Opera's current diva-in-residence, makes her museum début with a Valentine's Day program of songs about women and love. ♦ Feb. 15 at 8: The violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg joins the pianist Anne-Marie McDermott and other friends for an evening of Schubert, Beethoven, and Dohnányi (the Piano Quintet). (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949.)

**MARILYN HORNE FOUNDATION CONCERTS: LAUREN SKUCE AND GEORGE FRANÇOIS**
Skuce, a standout soprano of City Opera's fall season (where she sang lead roles in "L'Étoile" and "Suor Angelica"), and her pianist perform a recital of Rossini, Bellini, Debussy ("Chansons de Bilitis"), Wolf, and Bruce Adolphe, at the Kosciuszko Foundation. (15 E. 65th St. 212-734-2130. Feb. 16 at 3.)

**MET CHAMBER ENSEMBLE**
Performing music by Mozart, Schubert (the "Trout" Quintet), Berg (the Chamber Concerto, conducted by James Levine), and Webern. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Feb. 16 at 5.)

**CARNEGIE HALL RECITALS**
Feb. 17: A concert of Wolf songs, on texts by Goethe and Mörike, by a pair of magnificent opposites, the baritone Thomas Hampson (a refined lieder purist in the tradition of his teacher Elisabeth Schwarzkopf) and Daniel Barenboim (a powerhouse concert pianist). ♦ Feb. 18: The pianist Mitsuko Uchida, a graceful and exquisite interpreter of the Viennese classics, plays a concert of Schubert (the Sonata in G Major, D.894), Schumann, and Schoenberg (the Three Piano Pieces, Op. 11). ♦ Feb. 24: The radiant Karita Mattila sings a program of Duparc, Sibelius, Dvořák (the Gypsy Songs, Op. 55), and Rachmaninoff. Her accompanist is Martin Katz. ♦ Feb. 25: Leif Ove Andsnes—whose emotionally restrained keyboard style shelters an artist of growing power and insight—plays a solo recital of Debussy, Grieg, Chopin (including the Third Sonata), and Akira Miyoshi. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. All concerts begin at 7:30.)

**CLAREMONT ENSEMBLE**
In a tribute to Ned Rorem in his eightieth birthday year, the ensemble offers a concert that pairs pieces by Rorem ("Bright Music" and "The Santa Fe Songs") with some of the French music he adores—Ravel's Piano Trio and Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp. (Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 19 at 8. No tickets required.)

**"COMPOSERS OUT FRONT": RANDALL WOOLF**
The American Composers Orchestra, a decidedly mainstream institution, begins its third season of informal concerts at Joe's Pub with a program devoted to music by Randall Woolf, a composer whose radical eclecticism—he embraces techno, country, gospel, alternative rock, classical concert music, and more—is exceptional even for a downtown denizen. His performers include Twisted Tutu (the piano-vocal electronica duo of Kathleen Supové and Eve Beglarian) and Soup, a gospel-and-jazz-oriented chamber combo (with Woolf on keyboards). (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200. Feb. 21 at 7.)

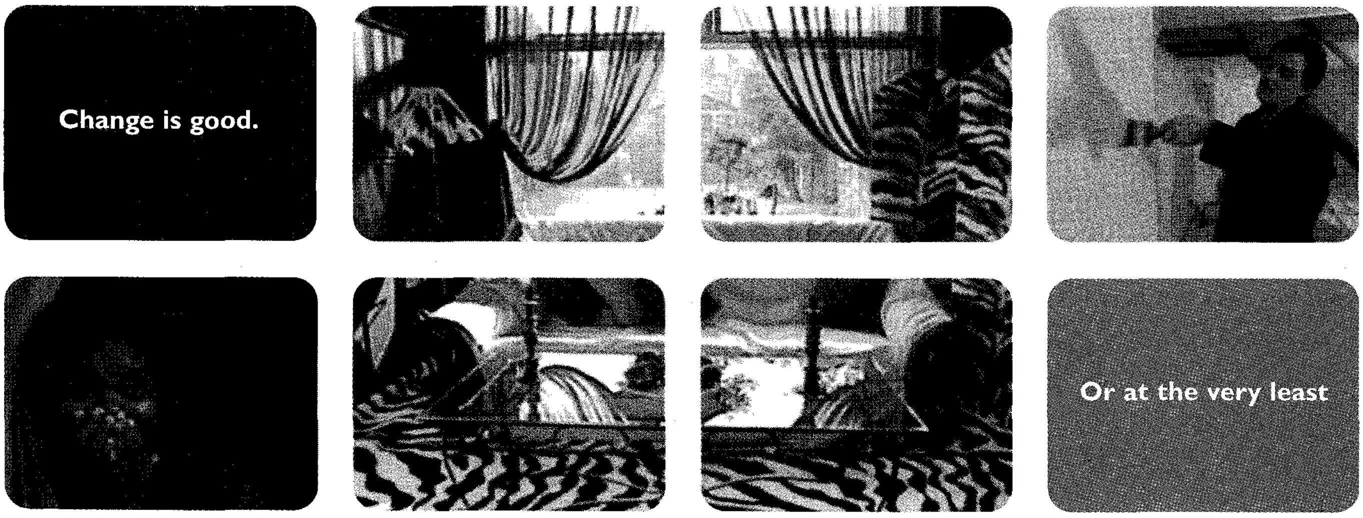
**JOY IN SINGING**
The group's annual Composers' Concert highlights songs by Arthur Farwell and Leslie Adams; the singers include the baritone André Solomon-Glover. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, Lincoln Center. Feb. 22 at 3. No tickets required.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**RUSSIAN AMERICAN KIDS CIRCUS**
Young Russo-Brooklynites demonstrate the old-country way of flying, tumbling, balancing, juggling, contorting, and cycling onstage. (Walt Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Feb. 23 at 2.)

**READINGS**
Feb. 12 at 8: The poet-musicians Tracie Morris and Cecil Taylor read from their recent works at the Poetry Project. (St. Mark's In-the Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-0910.) ♦ Feb. 18 at 7: A night of words and images, with, among others, Dale Peck and Mary Gaitskill and the video artist John Pilson. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11.) ♦ Feb. 20 at 7: The independent publishing house Akashic Books presents two of its own writers, T Cooper and Yongsoo Park, as well as Michael Richardson of Sporidia Press, for a reading from their novels. (Soft Skull Shortwave Bookstore, 71 Bond St. Boerum Hill, Brooklyn. 718-643-1599.) ♦ Feb. 24 at 8: T. Coraghessan Boyle reads from his new novel, "Drop City," and William H. Gass reads from a work in progress. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

**TALKS**
Feb. 18 at 6:30: The photographer Thomas Struth joins the *New Yorker* critic Peter Schjeldahl, the art historian Ulrich Loock, and the curator Douglas Eklund for a discussion of his work. (Goethe Institut, 1014 Fifth Ave. 212-439-8700.) ♦ Feb. 19 at 6:30: The critic Helen Vendler talks about Yeats and the sonnet. (South Court Auditorium, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-930-0855.) ♦ Feb. 22 at 1: Marianne Hardart and Lorraine B. Diehl talk about Horn & Hardart's legendary Art Deco food-dispensing system, the Automat. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 212-534-1672.)



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## MOVIES OPENING

**ALL THE REAL GIRLS**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Feb. 14. (Angelika Film Center.)

**AMANDLA!**
**A REVOLUTION IN FOUR-PART HARMONY**
Lee Hirsch's documentary about South African freedom music. Opening Feb. 19. (Film Forum.)

**CHIHWASEON (PAINTED FIRE)**
Im Kwon-Taek ("Chunhyang") directed this biopic about the nineteenth-century Korean painter known as Ohwon. In Korean. Opening Feb. 14. (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**DAREDEVIL**
Ben Affleck plays the Marvel Comics superhero, in an action movie written and directed by Mark Steven Johnson. Also with Jennifer Garner, Colin Farrell, Michael Clarke Duncan, and Jon Favreau. Opening Feb. 14.

**DARK BLUE**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Feb. 21.

**EROTIC TALES**
Three short films on the subject of love from the directors Susan Seidelman, Amos Kollek, and Jos Stelling. Opening Feb. 21. (Quad Cinema.)

**FROM THE OTHER SIDE**
Chantal Akerman directed this documentary about illegal immigrants entering the U.S. from Mexico. Opening Feb. 20. (Anthology Film Archives.)

**GERRY**
Matt Damon and Casey Affleck play two friends with the same nickname who become lost in the desert, in a drama written and directed by Gus Van Sant. Opening Feb. 14. (Angelika Film Center.)

**GODS AND GENERALS**
Ron Maxwell ("Gettysburg") directed this adaptation of Jeff Shaara's Civil War novel. The ensemble cast includes Stephen Lang as Stonewall Jackson and Robert Duvall as Robert E. Lee. Opening Feb. 21.

**HE LOVES ME, HE LOVES ME NOT**
A drama about an affair between an art student (Audrey Tautou) and a married doctor (Samuel Le Bihan), told from both points of view. In French. Opening Feb. 14. (Paris.)

**THE JUNGLE BOOK II**
An animated sequel from Disney, with voices by Haley Joel Osment and John Goodman. Opening Feb. 14.

**LAWLESS HEART**
Neil Hunter and Tom Hunsinger wrote and directed this drama about a boyfriend, a husband, and a father who reassess what they want from life while attending a funeral in a small English town. Opening Feb. 21. (Sunshine Cinema.)

**THE LIFE OF DAVID GALE**
Kate Winslet plays a reporter trying to clear the name of a death-penalty opponent (Kevin Spacey) who's set to be executed for murder, in a thriller directed by Alan Parker. Opening Feb. 21.

**OLD SCHOOL**
Todd Phillips ("Road Trip") directed this comedy, in which three thirtysomething guys decide to set up a fraternity. With Will Ferrell, Luke Wilson, and Vince Vaughn. Opening Feb. 21.

**STONE READER**
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Feb. 12. (Film Forum.)

**TILL HUMAN VOICES WAKE US**
A psychologist (Guy Pearce) returns to his home town, where he meets a young woman (Helena Bonham-Carter) who reminds him of a past love. Michael Petroni directed. Opening Feb. 21.

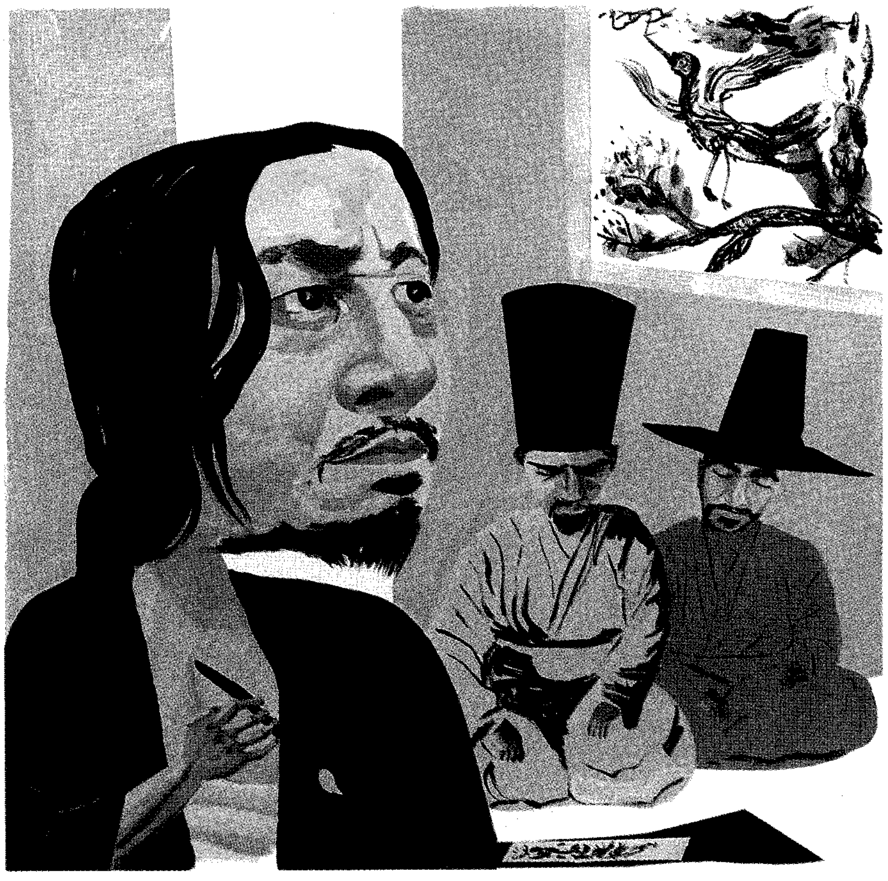
## FILM NOTES

**ANTOINE AND COLETTE**
François Truffaut's alter ego Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud), a classical-music lover on his own in Paris and working in a record factory, develops a crush on a fellow-concertgoer named Colette (Marie-France Pisier) in this perfect twenty-nine-minute comic vignette from 1962, originally part of an anthology called "Love at Twenty" (which also included entries from Marcel Ophuls, Andrzej Wajda, Renzo Rossellini, and Shintaro Ishihara). Colette crossing her legs during a recital is an amorous crescendo for Antoine. He gives off a melancholy young-adult allure—which evaporates in the cozy embrace of Colette's family. Truffaut and his actors are peerless at capturing the obvious teases, awkward feints, and brutal sizing-up of adolescent infatuation. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (Florence Gould Hall; Feb. 18.)

**THE BAND WAGON**
The Comden-Green script isn't as consistently fresh as the one they did for "Singin' in the Rain," but there have been few screen musicals as good as this one, starring those two great song-and-dance men Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan. Actually, Buchanan's dancing and his rosy-ripe way with his lines (satirical cant about the theatuh) have such style and flourish that he steals the picture. (His role is a spoof of Orson Welles). The plot, about a movie star (Astaire) trying for a comeback on Broadway and falling in love with a ballerina (Cyd Charisse), is a relaxed excuse for a series of urbane revue numbers that includes "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "That's Entertainment," and "Triplets" and culminates in the "Girl Hunt" dance sequence—a parody of Mickey Spillane's bloody boudoir fiction. With Oscar Levant, in one of his best movie roles (he and Nanette Fabray play at being Comden and Green). Originally released in 1953.—*Pauline Kael* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 17.)

**LE CERCLE ROUGE**
In this de-luxe piece of heist-film engineering from 1970, the writer-director Jean-Pierre Melville provides a satisfying payoff for the audience, if not the characters—according to the hardboiled karma of the plot, everyone winds up philosophical or dead. Just released ex-con Alain Delon and escaped prisoner Gian-Maria Volonté take turns saving each other's life and then enlist marksman Yves Montand to help them pull off a Paris jewelry-store robbery. Bourvil is the inspector on their trail, and François Périer the well-connected owner of an irresistible gangland night club. Volonté's juicy wildness as a self-proclaimed "amateur" and Montand's blowsy authority as an alcoholic help lubricate the plot. And with the help of the cinematographer Henri Decaë, Melville puts on a virtuoso display of movie-action geometry, from the red circle of chalk Delon uses on a pool cue to the slashing lines he cuts in his blocky American car. In French.—*M.S.* (Film Forum.)

**CHICAGO**
The time is the nineteen-twenties, but the setting is so stylized, so shamelessly grounded in a hundred other shows and films, that "Chicago" barely qualifies as a period piece; indeed, it merrily jabs at the celebrity-lust of our own era. Catherine Zeta-Jones is Velma Kelly, and Renée Zellweger is Roxie Hart. Each is a man-killer, and each resides in jail, plotting her defense with the silken legal help of Billy Flynn (Richard Gere). The music and lyrics by Kander and Ebb operate on the old-fashioned principle that every song should be a showstopper, regardless of whether the show should be stopped. The director, Rob Marshall, cuts away furiously during every song, and this chronic wish to glance aside makes us wonder: could the performers not weather the camera's unstinting gaze? The only player to conquer the movie is Zeta-Jones, who gets by on a full tank of unleaded oomph. The film has punch, but it never really conveys the delicious, redeeming sense that life can be lived on the hoof.—*Anthony Lane* (Re-



R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

*Opening February 14, Im Kwon-Taek's latest movie, "Chihwaseon (Painted Fire)."*

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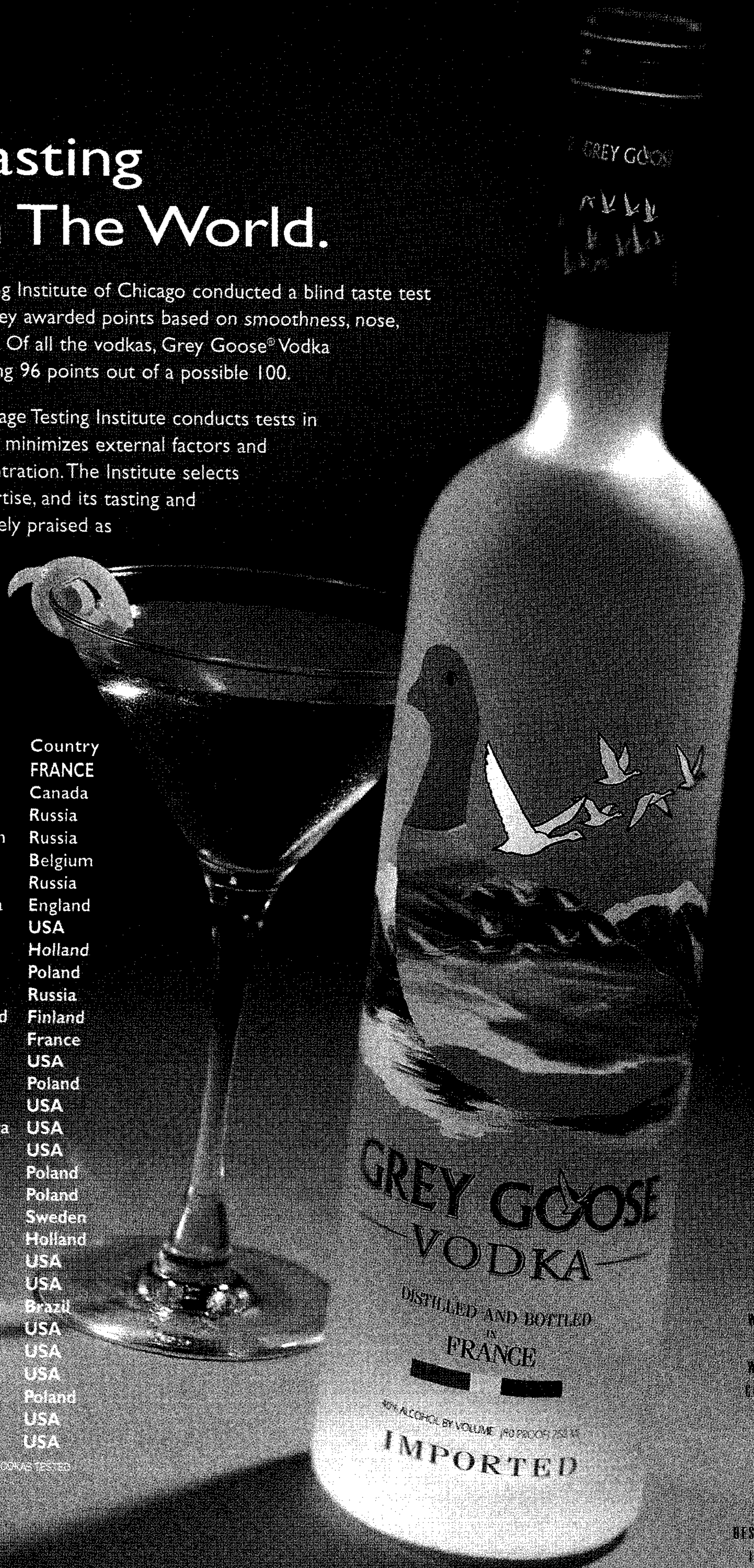
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| 92 | Staraya Moskva Premium | Russia |
| 91 | Van Hoo Vodka | Belgium |
| 91 | Stolichnaya Vodka | Russia |
| 90 | Tanqueray Sterling Vodka | England |
| 90 | Rain 1995 Harvest Vodka | USA |
| 89 | Ketel One Vodka | Holland |
| 88 | Wyborowa Vodka | Poland |
| 87 | Kremlyovskaya Vodka | Russia |
| 86 | Finlandia Vodka of Finland | Finland |
| 86 | Alps French Vodka | France |
| 85 | Skyy Vodka | USA |
| 82 | Original Polish Vodka | Poland |
| 82 | Glenmore Special | USA |
| 82 | Fleischmann's Royal Vodka | USA |
| 81 | Mr. Boston Vodka | USA |
| 80 | Pole Star Vodka | Poland |
| 80 | Luksusowa Potato Vodka | Poland |
| 80 | Absolut Vodka | Sweden |
| 78 | Cardinal Vodka | Holland |
| 78 | Barton Vodka | USA |
| 78 | Barclay's Vodka | USA |
| 78 | Amazon Vodka | Brazil |
| 76 | Skol Vodka | USA |
| 74 | Smirnoff Vodka | USA |
| 74 | Crystal Palace Vodka | USA |
| 74 | Belvedere | Poland |
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Jeffrey Toobin
Edna O'Brien
Bruce McCall
Maira Kalman
and more

AND: A calendar of New Yorker
events across the country

viewed in our issue of 1/6/03.) (84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

**CITY OF GOD**

Just how far into your face can a movie get? This one has every intention of leaving you scalded and bruised. Set in Rio de Janeiro, it was directed by Fernando Meirelles, who tries every trick known to cameramen: freeze frames, whip pans, multiple dissolves, slow motion, double motion, any kind of motion. The object is to keep pace with his characters, the young and dispossessed of the Brazilian slums. The movie hastens roughly from the nineteen-sixties to the eighties, as we watch the boys either die or grow old before their time. The result is a jolting ride, but such is the skill on show that we run the risk of being too exhilarated to notice every death; does the film convince in its plea for the forgotten poor, or are we encouraged to forget them as they fall? In Portuguese.—*A.L.* (1/20/03) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

**CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND**

Just as audiences are recovering from "Adaptation," here comes another Charlie Kaufman script. George Clooney directed, but this project is pure Kaufman: fact and fiction tossed in the blender together, with plenty of formal trickery. The story, or more precisely, the leaping-off point, is the autobiography of Chuck Barris, the producer who invented "The Dating Game," "The Newlywed Game," and "The Gong Show," which he also hosted. Then, there is this small matter of political assassinations: Barris claimed to be a C.I.A. hit man, tapped for various "wet" operations throughout his television career. Sam Rockwell plays Barris as a carnal, slightly crazed man who's also deeply insecure that he'll be remembered as a purveyor of trash. Is this what tipped him into his fantasy life? This nimble and free-spirited film doesn't say; it continually shifts perspective and plays with the mystery. In the end, it's a story of wayward ambition and an object lesson in what people will do when placed in front of a television camera. With Drew Barrymore and Julia Roberts as the duelling women in Barris's life.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

**GANGS OF NEW YORK**

Daniel Day-Lewis, returning to movies after a spell of shoemaking in Florence, disports himself with royal assurance as the voluble thug William Cutting (Bill the Butcher) in Martin Scorsese's generally unsuccessful epic about nineteenth-century gang life in New York. Wielding knife and cleaver, Day-Lewis does what he can to give this semi-coherent production some theatrical panache, but Scorsese and his screenwriters never succeed in linking together the intimate personal dramas and the endless gang war between the nativist Yankees (i.e., Protestants) and the new waves of Irish immigrants. The movie isn't boring, but it's heavy-spirited, obvious, and grisly, with an emphasis on knives and blood that borders on the fetishistic. With a sullen, stolid Leonardo DiCaprio as a young Irish immigrant eager to avenge the death of his father, Cameron Diaz as a prostitute and pickpocket, Liam Neeson as a fallen Irish leader, and Jim Broadbent as the corrupt political boss William Tweed.—*David Denby* (12/23 & 30/02) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

**THE GURU**

Daisy von Scherler Mayer's film stars Jimi Mistry as a young Indian who comes to New York in search of his fortune and stumbles into the sex industry, first as a hopeless stud in a porno flick, then as a modish spiritual adviser, offering hope to the ungratified loins of high society. All this makes for a promising culture clash, but somehow the movie contrives to miss every target in sight, and ends up in an even denser cloud of unknowing than its discomfited hero. The Indian characters are coarsened and patronized, while the credulity of the sage's clients—a subject worth mocking—is merely pecked at with fainthearted gags. Redemption takes the form of Heather Graham, who plainly enjoys her stint as a bondage goddess, and of Marisa Tomei, whose timing is pointed enough to extract something, at least, from the role of a randy dope.—*A.L.* (2/3/03) (Beekman, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

**THE HOURS**

It has to overcome an over-all morbidity, a fractured time sequence, and Philip Glass's intrusive, chiming score, and, amazingly, it does. Stephen Daldry directed this adaptation of Michael Cunningham's prize-winning 1998 novel, from a script by David Hare. They've fashioned a lovely, serious work—as good as any recent "literary" movie—devoted to two themes, the variety of human bonds, especially the bond of love, and the gift that the dying make to the living. Nicole Kidman gives a revelatory performance as Virginia Woolf, both in 1923, at the time of writing "Mrs. Dalloway," and in 1941, when she loaded her coat with stones and walked into a river. Julianne Moore is a depressed Los Angeles housewife in 1951, and Meryl Streep plays a contemporary New York literary editor who hopes to give a party for a poet friend (Ed Harris) dying of AIDS. The widely separated episodes fit together as surely and lightly as dancers in a Balanchine ballet.—*D.D.* (12/23 & 30/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

**HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS**

Or, how not to make a movie. This pitiful battle-of-the-sexes comedy stars Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey. She's a reporter writing a story about the irritating things women do that drive men away, he's a guy who makes a bet with his friends that he's irresistible. The painful scenes arrive in a jumble as the two leads shed all dignity performing juvenile high jinks.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

**LOST IN LA MANCHA**

This documentary, directed by Louis Pepe and Keith Fulton, offers a new twist on the age-old pleasure of watching somebody truly and sumptuously screw up. Better still, none of it is his fault. The twist is that the fall guy, in this instance, is as playful and amenable a figure as exists in modern filmmaking: Terry Gilliam, who made his name with "Monty Python's Flying Circus" and subsequently at the helm of movies such as "Brazil," "The Fisher King," and "Twelve Monkeys." Now he tries to heave into motion his long-pondered adaptation of "Don Quixote." Everything that can go wrong goes wrong, graced by a few extra glitches that even the most capricious of gods would not have dared to arrange. The combination of a Don (Jean Rochefort) so sick that he cannot dismount from his horse, Spanish weather of Biblical ferocity, and NATO jets roaring over the set would reduce most directors to despair, yet Gilliam comes up grinning. This account of his tribulations drags toward the end, but you leave with not only an admiring grasp of his Quixote-like obsession but also an absolute determination never to work in pictures. That has to be a lesson worth learning.—*A.L.* (2/3/03) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

**THE MERCHANT OF FOUR SEASONS**

A measured, distanced study of a victim (Hans Hirschmüller)—a rejected son of a middle-class family—and how he loses the will to live. This 1971 film is considered by many to be a masterpiece, but the style of the director, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, doesn't have enough authority; an American viewer may be uncertain how to react to the distancing devices, and how to react to the masochism and the misogyny and the view of women as coldhearted betrayers. When is Fassbinder being sardonic, and when is the degradation and futility meant to be taken straight? The picture, which has some conceptual resemblances to the later films of Robert Bresson and to Dreyer's "Gertrud," and some psychological resemblances to such Emil Jannings films as "Variety," is an art thing, all right, but perhaps not a work of art. And most important of all, it isn't likable. In German.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Feb. 17-18.)

**NARC**

Of all the hard-assed, violent, grainy-looking urban thrillers to have emerged since "The French Connection," this movie is perhaps the hardest and the

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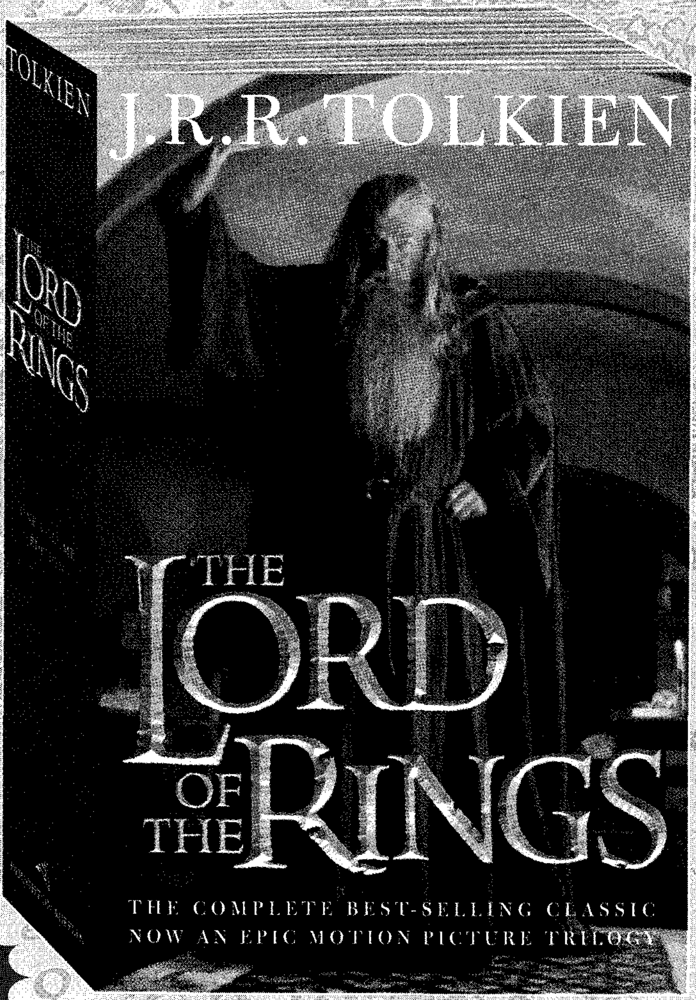
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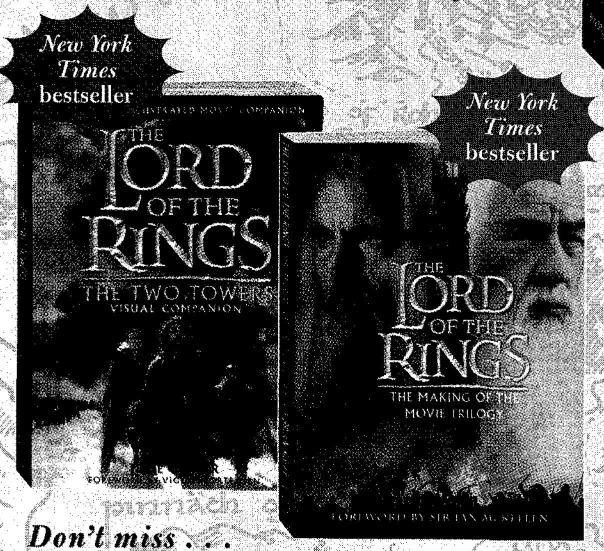
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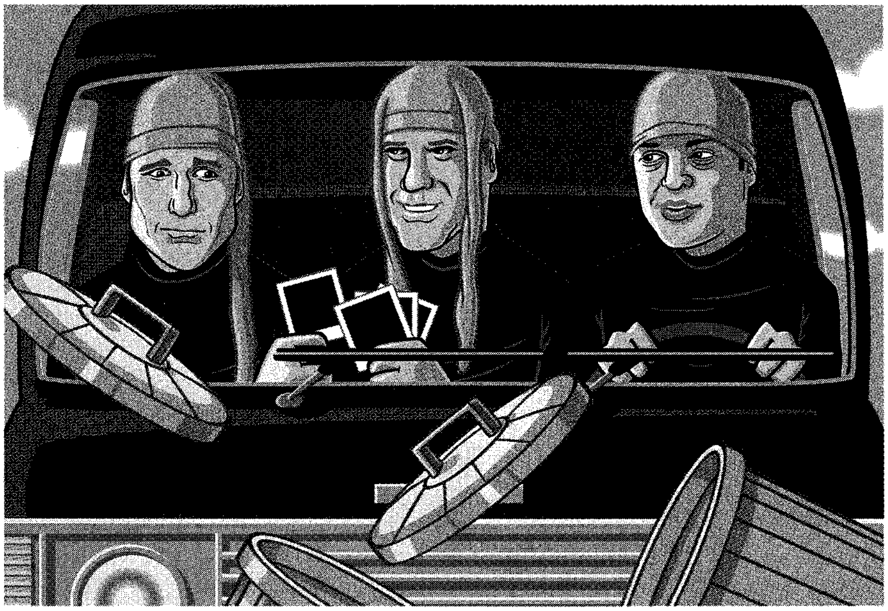
most turbulent—and also one of the most soulful and touching. The hero, Nick Tellis (Jason Patric), has been thrown off the force but is brought back to investigate the mysterious death of an undercover cop. Tellis teams up with the murdered cop's partner, Henry Oak (Ray Liotta), and they pursue the loose ends of the case through the freezing streets of Detroit and into unspeakably sordid hideaways. The movie is half downbeat police procedural, half "Rashomon," half existential drama. That makes three halves, but this is an ambitious picture. The young director, Joe Carnahan, wants to impress upon us the intractability of our life on this earth. In all, the movie is a blood-soaked, hellish experience—a midnight special for lovers of a violent genre—but it has been made with a mixture of ferocity and gentleness that leaves one exhausted and at peace.—*D.D.* (1/27/03) (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)



*Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell, and Vince Vaughn in "Old School."*

MICHAEL WELDON

**THE PIANIST**
Roman Polanski's drama about the survival of a real-life Polish Jew, the pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrien Brody), during the grim days of the Holocaust is a movie that has been perfectly produced. The sense of scale and detail is exact, and the violence is neither exaggerated nor minimized but presented with clear-eyed accuracy. Yet this is not a work of great originality or imagination. Its protagonist lacks depth, and the theme of survival through hiding is, by its very nature, redundant. The playwright Ronald Harwood adapted the 1946 book that Szpilman wrote about his experiences without attempting to open up the hero at all. Is he ashamed, defiant, guilty? Grateful for his luck? We haven't a clue. His survival is an anomaly, a mistake, a joke—and that may be why the story appealed to Polanski. Shot largely in Warsaw.—*D.D.* (1/13/03) (East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.)

**THE QUIET AMERICAN**
The second adaptation of Graham Greene's novel, and, on the whole, a more successful effort than Joseph Mankiewicz's, of 1958. Michael Caine may lack the defeated nobility that Michael Redgrave brought to the role of the hero—a British journalist named Fowler—but few can beat Caine when it comes to the sad and the seedy. What is more, he squares off beautifully against Brendan Fraser. With his fine if bumbling manners, and the earnest thickness of his spectacles, Fraser is ideal as Pyle, the young do-gooder who, almost despite himself, winds up doing harm. The two men share a love for a young Vietnamese woman (Do Hai Yen), and the director, Phillip Noyce, manages not to whack us too hard with the symbolic weight of their rivalry. Greene fans, a prickly bunch at the best of times, will pick holes in the movie, but Christopher Doyle's camera, slithering through the rooms and battlegrounds of an alluring land, takes us as close as we could wish to the heart of the matter.—*A.L.* (11/25/02) (Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII.)

**THE RECRUIT**
Colin Farrell, the young Irish actor, has dark, hurting eyes, stubble on his upper lip and chin, and a slender, lithe body. He can't miss as a star, and he gives promise of knowing what he's up to as an actor. He's also the only interesting thing in "The Recruit," yet another paranoid thriller. This one is about training for the C.I.A., and it also stars Al Pacino in his domineering-satanic mode, complete with an opera-house Mephistopheles beard and glittering eyes. The Australian-born filmmaker Roger Donaldson has always been a competent director, but he doesn't have the wit to rise above a bad script, which, in this movie, leaves the unfortunate impression that the recruits are training less for intelligence work than for future appearances in action movies.—*D.D.* (1/27/03) (Battery Park 16, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

**SOME CAME RUNNING**
When the frigid blond professor (Martha Hyer) tells a lapsed author and war veteran (Frank Sinatra) that he has an exciting talent, it's as unintentionally comic as Dorothy Malone taking off her eyeglasses for Bogey was intentionally comic in "The Big Sleep." But Vincente Minnelli's 1958 screen version of James Jones' sprawling novel about a literary black sheep in a small Midwestern town develops an irresistible momentum that sweeps aside objections to its campy depictions of culture, both high and low. Minnelli's hyper-expressive camera style, set loose in real locations, makes pop opera out of the rift between the heartland demimonde and the bourgeoisie. Sinatra is sensationally moody (he often was in this era); Shirley MacLaine manages to mine pathos, sweetness, and exuberance from her clichéd part as a gold-hearted factory girl. And, as a sardonic gambler, Dean Martin has a genius for just being himself that turns his character's affectation—never removing his white Stetson—into an indelible signature.—*M.S.* (Gramercy Theatre; Feb. 14.)

**STONE READER**
Mark Moskowitz directed this shot-in-my-spare-time documentary about his love of reading and his search for an author, Dow Mossman, who published a well-received first novel in 1972 and then disappeared from the literary scene. The search for Mossman feels like a McGuffin: Moskowitz waits until late in his quest to go to Iowa, even though he learns early on that the writer was a graduate student there. Still, the subject of literary promise, and why so many novelists turn out to be one-hit wonders, is eloquently addressed by luminaries like Frank Conroy, Leslie Fiedler, and Robert Gottlieb. The question that haunts the movie is this: if you published a novel that almost no one read, did it ever really exist?—*M.A.* (Film Forum.)

**25TH HOUR**
A thirtyish drug dealer (Edward Norton) who is too smart for his situation gets pinched and sentenced to seven years in prison. His imminent departure produces a crisis in the lives of his best friends, a cynical Wall Street trader (Barry Pepper) and a schlubby private-school teacher (Philip Seymour Hoffman). The movie might be described as a turbulent elegy for the burnt-out hopes of a generation. There's a thriller plot buried in the material, but it's done half-heartedly. The glory of the movie is its talk—the profane New York verve of the three men, suffused with a post-September 11th bitterness. David Benioff adapted his own novel, and Spike Lee directed. Brian Cox plays the hero's father, and Rosario Dawson his girlfriend.—*D.D.* (1/13/03) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**ABOUT SCHMIDT** (12/16/02)
BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

**ADAPTATION** (12/9/02)
BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Sunshine Cinema.

**DIVINE INTERVENTION** (1/20/03)
Angelika Film Center and Kew Gardens Cinema.

**SHANGHAI KNIGHTS**
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

**TALK TO HER** (11/25/02)
BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.

## THEATRE ADDRESSES

*Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.*

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St.
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at Broadway.
**BAM Rose Cinemas,** 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
**Battery Park 16,** West St. at Vesey St.
**Beekman,** Second Ave. at 66th St.
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd St.
**Chelsea West,** 333 W. 23rd St.
**Cinemas 1, 2, and 3,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
**East 86th Street Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**84th Street Sixplex,** Broadway at 84th St.
**Empire 25,** on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th St.
**Film Forum,** W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd St.
**42nd Street E Walk,** 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
**Kew Gardens Cinema,** 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
**Kips Bay Theatre,** Second Ave. at 32nd St.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
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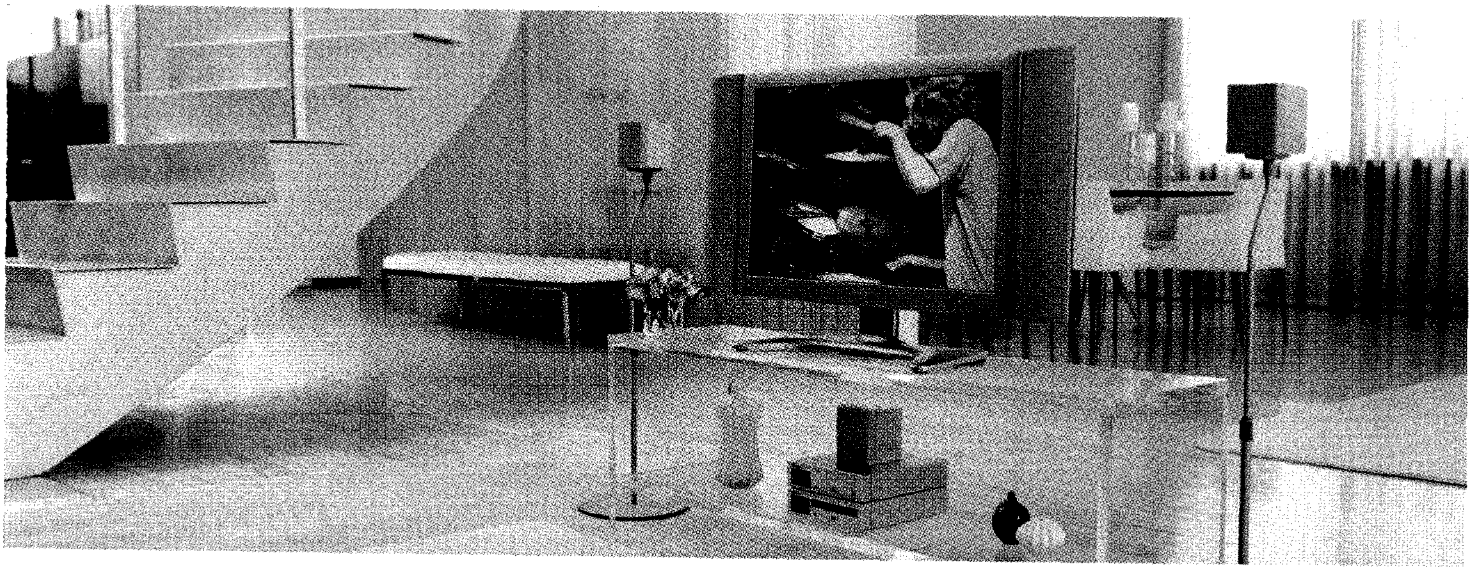

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**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th St.
**The Screening Room,** 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100).
**72nd Street East,** Third Ave. at 71st St.
**64th and 2nd,** Second Ave. at 64th St.
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd St.
**Sunshine Cinema,** 139-143 E. Houston St.
**Sutton 1 and 2,** Third Ave. at 57th St.
**34th Street Theatre,** 312 W. 34th St.
**Union Square,** Broadway at 13th St.
**Village East Cinemas,** Second Ave. at 12th St.
**Village Theatre VII,** Third Ave. at 11th St.
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th St.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Feb. 16: "You Ain't Heard Nothin'," a series of films that were made in both silent and sound versions. Feb. 15 at 1:30: "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1929, Lewis Milestone; silent). ♦ Feb. 15 at 4: "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1929, Milestone; sound version). ♦ Feb. 16 at 2: "Ladies of Leisure" (1930, Frank Capra; silent). ♦ Feb. 16 at 4: "Ladies of Leisure" (1930, Capra; sound version). ♦ Repertory nights. Feb. 15-16 at 6:30: "Loves of a Blonde" (1965, Milos Forman; in Czech). ♦ Feb. 22-23 at 6:30: "Paris, Texas" (1984, Wim Wenders). ♦ Winter-break screenings. Feb. 17-21 at 1:30: "Spirited Away" (2002, Hayao Miyazaki). ♦ *Starting Feb. 22: Films selected by* the New York Film Critics Circle. Feb. 22 at 2: "Citizen Kane" (1941, Orson Welles), introduced by Michael Atkinson. ♦ Feb. 22 at 4:30: Three films by Kenneth Anger (1947-63), introduced by Owen Gleiberman. ♦ Feb. 23 at 2: "October (Ten Days That Shook the World)" (1928, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), introduced by Bob Campbell. ♦ Feb. 23 at 4:15: "Triumph of the Will" (1935, Leni Reifenstahl; in German), introduced by Thelma Adams.

**BAM ROSE CINEMAS**
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Feb. 14 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Philadelphia Story" (1940, George Cukor). ♦ Feb. 15-20: The African Diaspora Film Festival. See www.bam.org for a complete schedule. ♦ Feb. 21-23: Three by Luis Buñuel. All films are in French. Feb. 21 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977). ♦ Feb. 22 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Phantom of Liberty" (1974). ♦ Feb. 23 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (1972). ♦ "Remembering Richard Harris." Feb. 25 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "This Sporting Life" (1963, Lindsay Anderson).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through Feb. 13: A Peter Sellers retrospective. Feb. 12 at 1:30, 5:30, and 9:30: "The Pink Panther Strikes Again" (1976, Blake Edwards). ♦ Feb. 12 at 3:30 and 7:30: "After the Fox" (1966, Vittorio De Sica). ♦ Feb. 13 at 1:10, 3:40, 7, and 9:30: "Being There" (1979, Hal Ashby). ♦ Starting Feb. 14: "Fassbinder," a six-week retrospective of the director's works. All films are in German. Feb. 14-16 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Marriage of Maria Braun" (1978). ♦ Feb. 17-18 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "The Merchant of Four Seasons" (†). ♦ Feb. 19-20 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:40, and 9:45: "Beware of a Holy Whore" (1971). ♦ Feb. 21-24 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Fox and His Friends" (1975). ♦ Feb. 25 at 1, 2:45, 4:30, 6:15, 8, and 9:45: "Fear of Fear" (1975).

**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—The cinematography of Raoul Coutard. Feb. 18 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Antoine and Colette" (†) and "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ Feb. 25 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "The Soft Skin" (1964, Truffaut; in French).

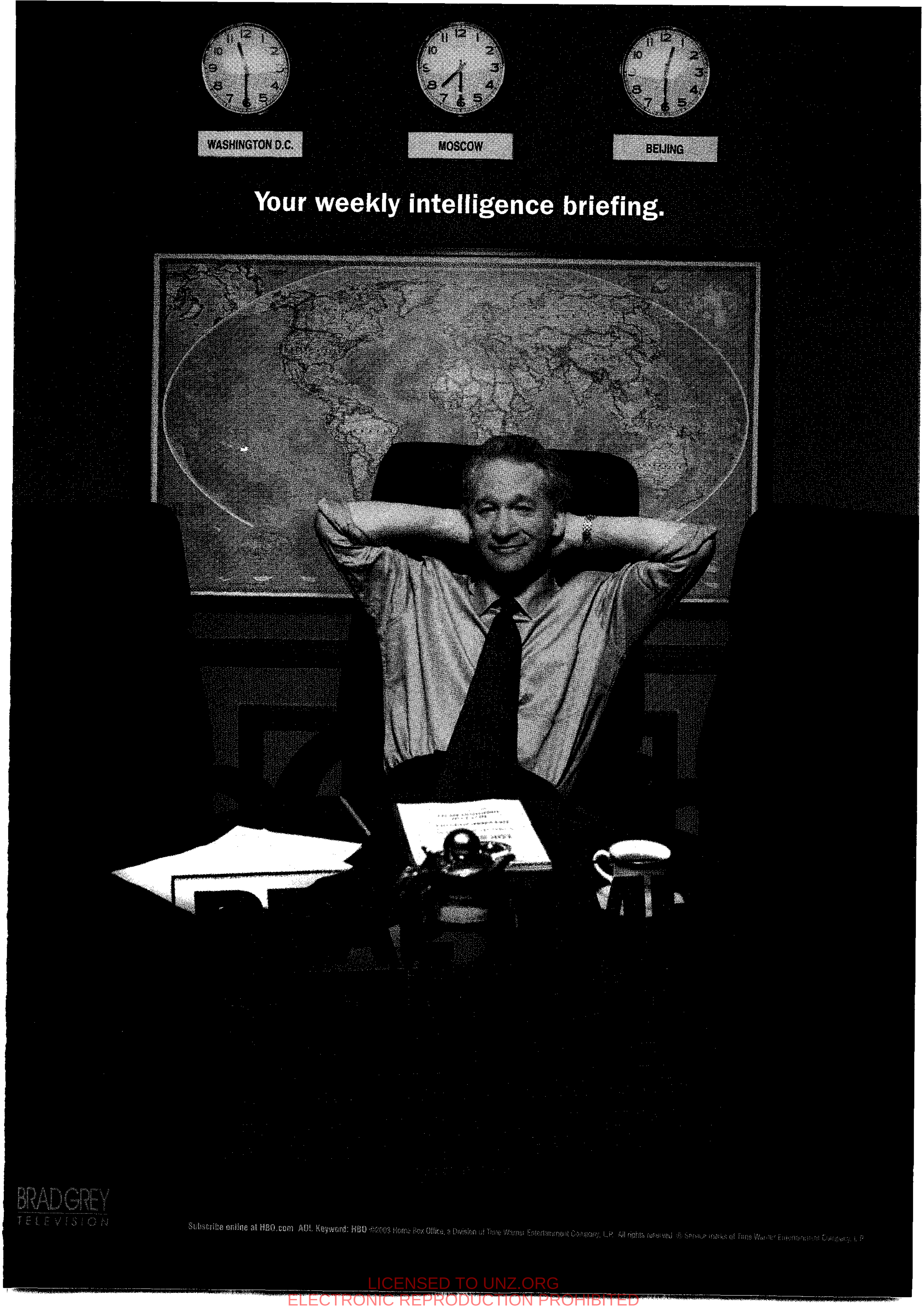
**GRAMERCY THEATRE**
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through March 3: "Twelve by Vincente Minnelli." Feb. 13 at 4:30 and Feb. 16 at 2: "Lust for Life" (1956). ♦ Feb. 14 at 2:30: "Some Came Running" (†). ♦ Feb. 14 at 6:15 and Feb. 16 at 7: "Bells Are Ringing" (1960). ♦ Feb. 14 at 8:45 and Feb. 15 at 4:30: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944). ♦ Feb. 15 at 2 and Feb. 21 at 3: "The Cobweb" (1955). ♦ Feb. 15 at 7: "The Clock" (1945). ♦ Feb. 15 at 8:45 and Feb. 22 at 3:30: "Madame Bovary" (1949). ♦ Feb. 16 at 4:30 and Feb. 22 at 8:30: "Gigi" (1958). ♦ Feb. 22 at 6: "Tea and Sympathy" (1956). ♦ Feb. 23 at 2: "Two Weeks in Another Town" (1962). ♦ Special event. Feb. 13 at 7: "Korczak" (1990, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish), introduced by Annette Insdorf, author of "Indelible Shadows." ♦ Through Feb. 20: The documentaries of Stanley Nelson. Feb. 17 at 6: "Two Dollars and a Dream" (1988). ♦ Feb. 17 at 7:30: "Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind" (2001). ♦ Feb. 20 at 4:15: "The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords" (1996). ♦ Feb. 20 at 8: "The Murder of Emmett Till" (2002). ♦ Through Feb. 22: A Béla Tarr retrospective. All films are in Hungarian. Feb. 20 at 2 and Feb. 22 at 1: "Almanac of Fall" (1985). ♦ Feb. 20 at 6: "Family Nest" (1976). ♦ Feb. 21 at 6: "The Outsider" (1981). ♦ Feb. 21 at 8:45: "The Prefab People" (1982). ♦ Recent acquisitions. Feb. 23 at 7: "Hybrid" (2000, Monteith McCollum). ♦ Feb. 24 at 6: "Thrane's Method" (1998, Unni Straume; in Norwegian).

**PIONEER THEATRE**
155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300)—French gangster films. Feb. 14-18: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). ♦ Feb. 21-25: "Le Samouraï" (1967, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French).

**SUNSHINE CINEMA**
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. Feb. 14-16: "Full Metal Jacket" (1987, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Feb. 21-22: "Private Parts" (1997, Betty Thomas).

**THALIA THEATRE**
Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"New Voices Since the Eighties." Feb. 15 at 1 and 6:30: "City of Hope" (1991, John Sayles). ♦ Feb. 15 at 3:30 and 9: "Lone Star" (1996, Sayles). ♦ Feb. 16 at 2 and 6:30: "Nenette et Boni" (1996, Claire Denis; in French). ♦ Feb. 9 at 4 and 8:30: "Trouble Every Day" (2001, Denis; in French). ♦ Feb. 22 at 5:30: "Human Resources" (1999, Laurent Cantet; in French). ♦ Feb. 22 at 7:30: "Time Out" (2001, Cantet; in French). ♦ Feb. 23 at 2 and 6:45: "Violent Cop" (1989, Takeshi Kitano; in Japanese). ♦ Feb. 23 at 4 and 8:45: "Brother" (2000, Kitano).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Feb. 14: "*Film Comment* Selects," movies chosen by the editors. Feb. 12 at 1 and 6:15 and Feb. 14 at 4:30: "Monrak Transistor" (2001, Pen-ek Ratanaruang; in Thai). ♦ Feb. 12 at 3:30 and 8:30: "Blissfully Yours" (2001, Apichatpong Weerasethakul; in Thai). ♦ Feb. 13 at 2:45 and 9:15 and Feb. 14 at 2:30: "Brief Crossing" (2001, Catherine Breillat; in French). ♦ Feb. 13 at 4:30 and Feb. 14 at 7: "Shadow Kill" (2002, Adoor Gopalakrishnan; in Malayalam). ♦ Feb. 14 at 9: "The New Life" (2002, Philippe Grandrieux; in French). ♦ Special winter-break presentation. Feb. 17 at 11 A.M. and 1:30 and Feb. 18-21 at 2: Wallace & Gromit shorts (1992-2002, Nick Park). ♦ "Adolph Green: New Yorker," a tribute to the late actor/writer/singer/dancer. Feb. 17 at 4 and 8:30: "The Band Wagon" (†). ♦ Feb. 17 at 6:15: "It's Always Fair Weather" (1954, Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly). ♦ Starting Feb. 19: "The Last of the Pioneers: Allan Dwan," a twenty-film survey of the director's career. Feb. 19 at 4:30 and 8:30 and Feb. 21 at 6:30: "Cattle Queen of Montana" (1954). ♦ Feb. 19 at 6:30 and Feb. 21 at 4:30 and 8:30: "Passion" (1954). ♦ Feb. 20 at 4:15 and Feb. 22 at 5:30: "Heidi" (1937). ♦ Feb. 22 at 7:30 and Feb. 23 at 9: "Her First Affair" (1933). ♦ Feb. 22 at 9:15 and Feb. 23 at 5:15: "Tennessee's Partner" (1955). ♦ Feb. 23 at 7:15 and Feb. 24 at 4:30: "Silver Lode" (1954). ♦ Feb. 24 at 6:15: "Suez" (1938). ♦ Feb. 24 at 8:30: "The Iron Mask" (1929).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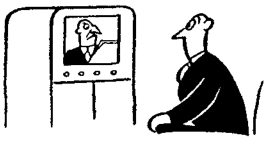
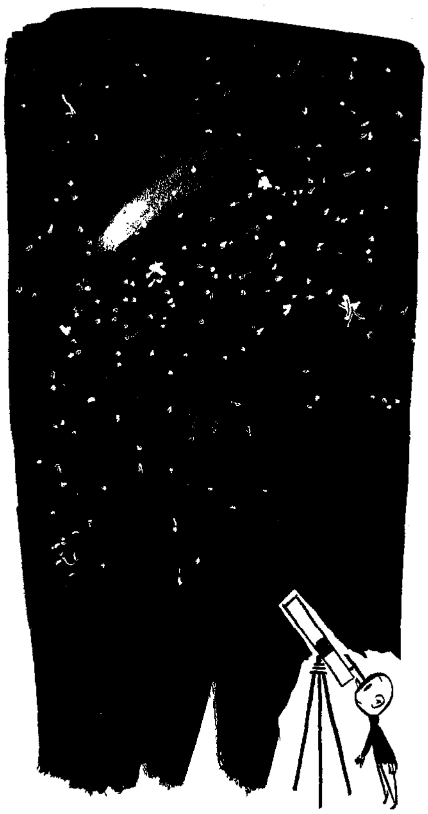
# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
## DOWN TO EARTH



There are federal programs that give succor to the old, the sick, and the hungry, that make food supplies and workplaces safer, and that train armies and buy ships and planes to protect friends and overawe enemies. There are programs that chase crooks and put them in jail. There are programs that support schoolteachers, cotton farmers, forest rangers, and AIDS researchers, and even provide stipends for a few stray artists and philosophers. But there is only one federal program that, at its best, reaches for the grandeur and the wonder that in ages past built great cathedrals and launched wooden ships into unknown waters where dragons lurked.

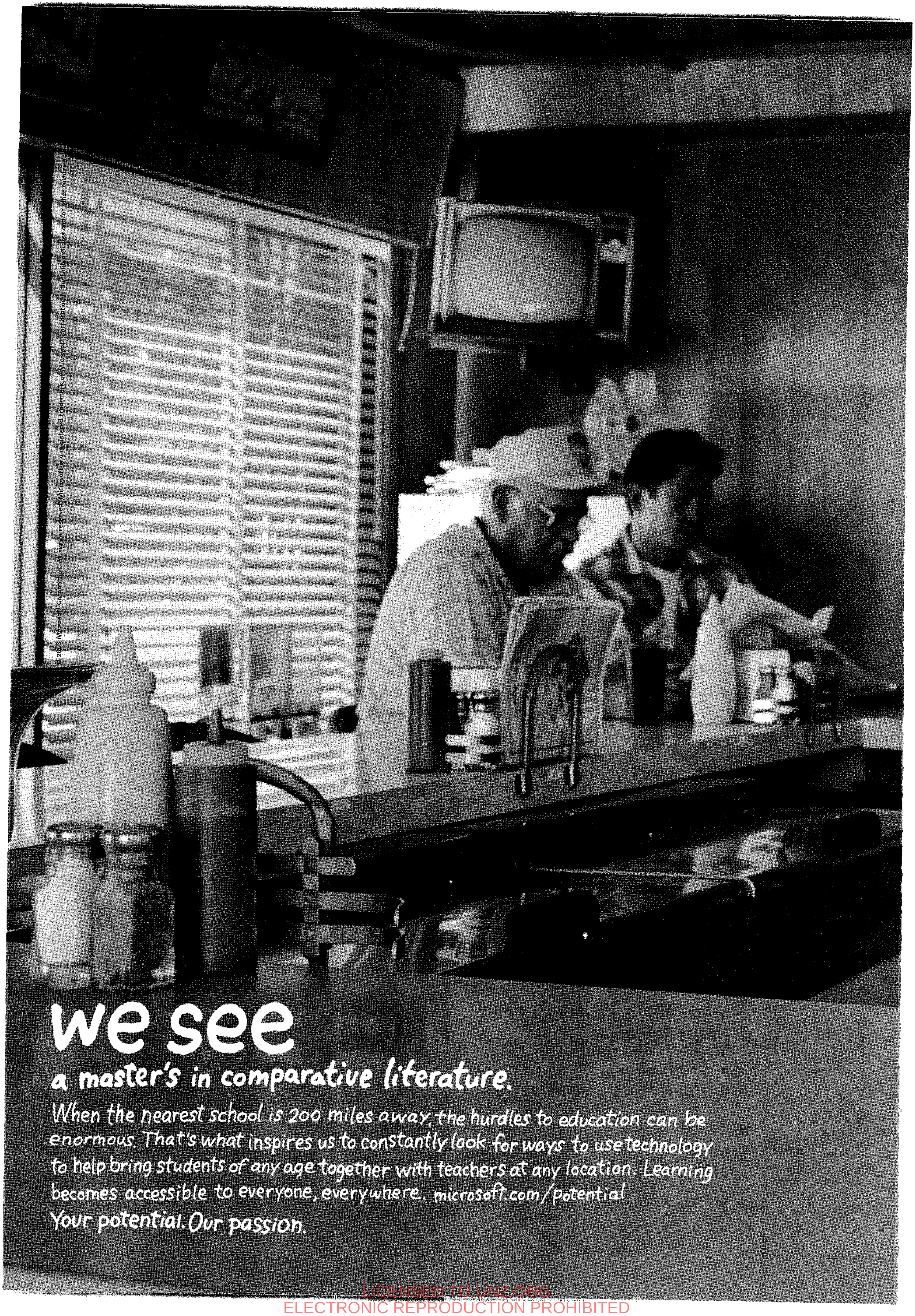
President Bush seemed to be saying something like that last week in his eulogy for the seven astronauts who died February 1st in the flaming arc of the Columbia. "This cause of exploration and discovery is not an option we choose; it is a desire written in the human heart," Bush said. "We are that part of creation which seeks to understand all creation. We find the best among us, send them forth into unmapped darkness, and pray they will return." Simple words, good words, and, like many of those prepared for this President's formal delivery, graceful words. The five men and two women of the Columbia crew—in background and origin as exhilaratingly varied as the crew-cut flyboys of the early space program were monochromatic—deserved the homely praise he gave them. (And when their ship went down they deserved better than the shopworn kitsch, the therapized bathos, with which the television news factories automatically responded.) They were talented, resourceful people who took on an assignment that they knew was as dangerous as it was glamorous. They were up to the job. But was the job worthy of them?



TOM BACHTELL

Thirty winters ago, in December of 1972, Harrison Schmitt and Eugene Cernan returned safely from the moon. They were the eleventh and twelfth men to walk on the surface of an extraterrestrial world; they were also, so far, the last. No one knew it at the time, but the Homeric age of manned space flight was over. With the completion of the Apollo program, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration stood at a fork in the road. As President Kennedy in 1961 had committed the nation to sending a man to the moon by the end of the decade, President Nixon could have proclaimed the goal of mounting an expedition to Mars by the end of the century. Technically, that goal was well within our grasp. But the country, mired in Vietnam and descending into Watergate, was in a sour and suspicious mood, and Nixon, despite an overwhelming reëlection victory, was not the man to summon it to starry adventures. Something more practical, more serviceable—something more down to earth—seemed the way to go. So we got the Shuttle.

And there we're stuck. The Shuttle has had its transcendent moments, the greatest of which came in 1993, when it made an ophthalmologic house call on the Hubble Space Telescope and corrected its optical prescription. But, on balance, the Shuttle has been a gigantic mistake. It was a flop well before it became a disaster. Its career has been marked by bad economics, bad science,



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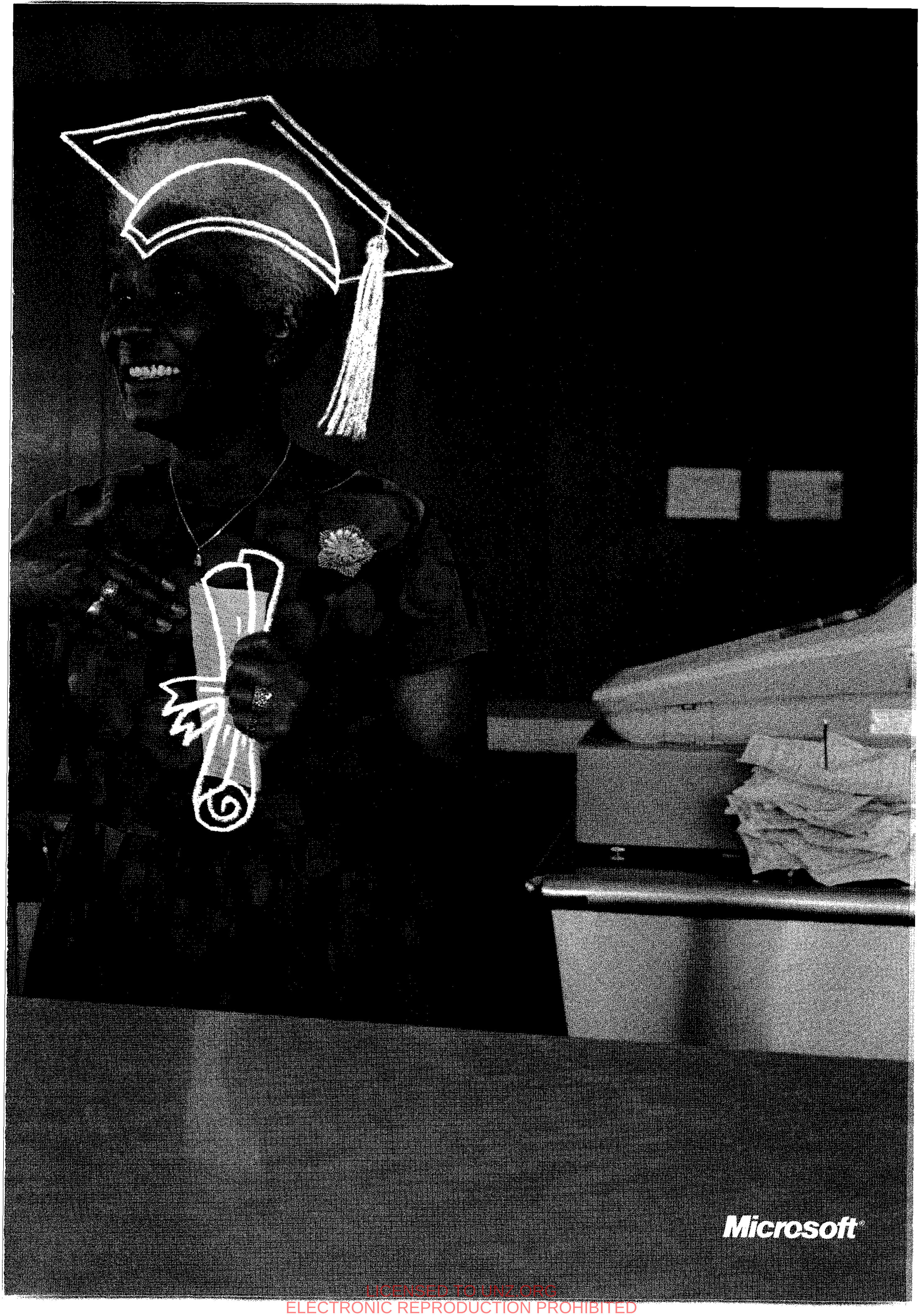
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bad engineering, and bad symbolism.

The Shuttle fleet was supposed to be a safe, reliable workhorse that would make a round trip every week at a cost of ten million dollars each, supplanting disposable rockets and practically paying for itself by doing odd jobs like putting communications satellites into orbit. Instead, until last week it was averaging five trips a year at a half-billion dollars apiece. Single-use rockets, like Europe's Ariane, get most of the routine satellite-launching business. The Shuttle has also been a bust scientifically. Most of its on-board experiments, up to and including the ones carried out by the Columbia crew, could have been done more cheaply and safely by robots on unmanned craft. Robert Park, the public-information director of the American Physical Society, the country's principal professional association of physicists, has said, "There is no experiment that has been done on the space shuttle that has made a significant difference to any field of science."

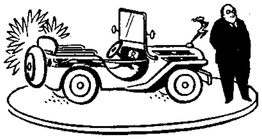
The Shuttle is a marvel of nineteen-seventies engineering, but this is no longer the nineteen-seventies; it's no longer the nineteen-anythings. The Shuttle does not follow the Macintosh model, whereby software drives hardware and new generations of machines, each exponentially more advanced than the last, roll out annually. It doesn't even follow the Detroit model, whereby you make millions of cars and use what you learn from that repetitive exercise to tweak your product into something familiar but better. The Shuttle follows the Cuban model: hang on to your '57 Chevy, keep it shiny, improvise what spare parts you can, and keep it running forever. The last quasi-serious effort to come up with a successor was downsized last November, when NASA announced that the Shuttle would remain in service until as late as 2020.

The traditional argument against the space program—that the money would be better spent on earthly uplift—posits a dubious zero-sum choice. But the zero-sum analysis does, to some extent, apply within the space program, and there is little doubt that its indisputably worthwhile elements, such as unmanned planetary and astronomical probes, have been pushed partly or wholly into the Shuttle money pit. We could have a fleet of solar sailing vessels plying interplanetary space, returning soil samples from Venus, Mars, and the asteroid belt for laboratory study on Earth. We could have robotic airplanes, balloons, and Jeep-size rovers exploring Mars (which has as much dry land as Earth does). We could have orbiters monitoring changing conditions on a dozen fascinating worlds, from sun-baked Mercury and Jupiter's watery moons Europa and Ganymede to mysterious Neptune and frigid Pluto. We could have ultra-high-resolution space telescopes capable of detecting Earth-like planets orbiting other stars. We have none of these.

There should be manned space travel, but it should be worth the candle. We could have said, "Let's go to Mars." Instead we said, "Let's make space travel banal and pointlessly dangerous by sending people into low Earth orbit, over and over, decade after decade, until too many of them get killed." Actually, we did have a President once who proposed a Mars mission. George H. W. Bush—how we miss him!—put it this way, in 1989, in his trademark style: "For the new century, back to the moon. Back to the future. And, this time, back to stay. And then a journey into tomorrow. A journey to another planet. A manned mission to Mars." ("Long way away. Fulla Martians. Don't care. Gonna do it," he did not add.) Unfortunately, Bush, Sr., was vague about how or when this might be done, and his ringing call soon faded into nothingness. His son—whose incuriosity in these matters is such that until last week he had never in his life visited the Johnson Space Center, in Houston—is not likely to repeat the call, much less find the money, amid wars and tax cuts, to carry it out. The day will come, but it will have to await a leader of vision, someday, in the far future.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

## THINK OF ENGLAND
## SIR GUY



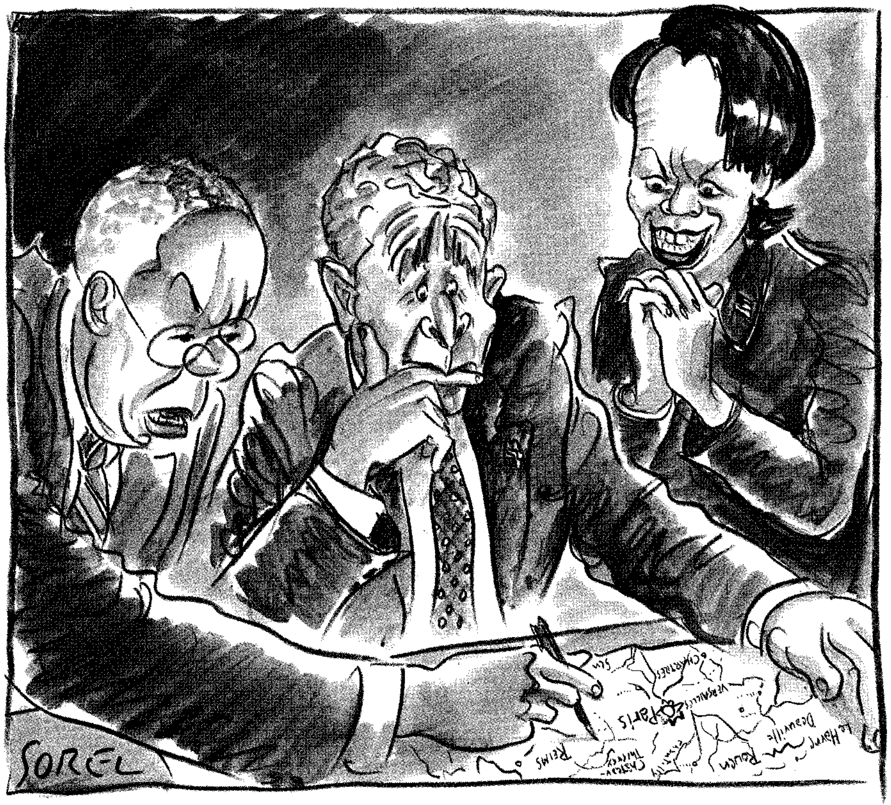
In times of conflict, the quest for cheering news becomes more urgent by the day. What is required is a prime slice of international gossip, and none is more succulent and sustaining than that dished up, over the centuries, by the British Royal Family. This time, as if by popular demand, the Firm—as the Windsor clan is sometimes known, lending it a heavy-browed influence on which Tony Soprano would hesitate to trespass—has surpassed itself.

Documents released by the Public Record Office on January 30th shed a fresh and delectable light on the abdication crisis of 1936, when King Edward VIII had to choose between his throne and his love for the American divorcée Wallis Simpson. The nation trembled; but so, we now learn, did Mrs. Simpson. To be precise, she trembled at regular intervals in the arms of a car salesman named Guy Trundle.

This could not be better. It was splendid enough to be told that Mr. Trundle was the son of a minister, that he was married, that he kept a place in Mayfair, and that he enjoyed a silken reputation on the dance floor. But we also have a photograph of Mr. Trundle, and it happily confirms our most fervent hopes. There he stands, lapels as thick as baize, his hat brim tilted, like the sights of a rifle, toward any customer who might walk in wearing pearls. He evidently hails from that all but extinct species known as the Ladies' Man, and, on a quiet morning at the dealership, one can still hear the ghost of his patter: "Latest model, two-seater, but, as I always say, what's wrong with two? Not sure if you know about engines, but, let me tell you, there's something pretty nifty under that hood. Go on, hop in. Feel that walnut. Tell you what, let's take her for a spin. Brighton, if you fancy. Spot of fizz, a dozen oysters, and see how the afternoon unwinds. Here, let me help you with that hand brake."

Well, it worked for Mrs. Simpson, who was tailed by officers from the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police as she pursued her unsuitable amour. From a distance, of course, Wise Guy seems infinitely more suited to her needs than Edgy Edward, on whose conduct in the boudoir it would be cruel to speculate, but whose features, at once blank and aggrieved, point to a vain and lifelong struggle with his own fly buttons. It cannot be

*surf wetsuit skeleton* Paris New York, N.Y. **HELMUT LANG** - S/S 03



**RUMOR OF THE WEEK** *Washington insiders say that the formerly dovish Colin Powell has become convinced that we must effect a "changement de régime" in France.*

• •

that the King was aware of the speedy Mr. Trundle; history suggests that you do not, as a general principle, forgo the gilded responsibility of commanding an empire for the sake of a woman who spends her evenings with another man's stick shift. If Edward was kept in the dark, it may be that darkness was what he deserved, and that more temperate souls in the government or the Royal household, not wishing him to stay and reign, were quite content for him to love and leave.

If so, they were right. Had Edward remained in place, he would have been not so much a wet blanket, which is easily managed, as a loose cannon—which, in the late nineteen-thirties, was a perilous thing to be. In 1937, the year after the abdication, he and his wife accepted an invitation to Germany, where, in Mrs. Simpson's words, they were to be "entertained by Herr Hitler." Great Britain is forever in her debt; without really trying, she saved it from being ruled by an appeaser and thus, potentially, from something far worse. Now, however, we know the true hero of the hour: Guy Trundle, the man who boffed for his country. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that he boffed for the continued existence of European civilization. Even if he is not to be graced with the posthumous peerage—Lord Trundle of Brighton—that he so richly merits, his memory should at least be honored by his employers of the time. Many of us would be proud to skim around town in a Ford Trundle, preferably in racing green. The irony is not just that he was a more skillful seducer than Edward VIII but that he would beyond question have made a better king. If only Mrs. Simpson, an expert manipulator, could have engineered a swap. The ex-monarch could have settled down to selling family Fords or grimly importing Volkswagens, while King Guy could have tipped his crown at a dapper angle, leaped nimbly from his throne, slipped into patent-leather shoes, and led his adoring people—a one, a two, a one-two-three—into an honorable war.

—*Anthony Lane*

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## AROUND CITY HALL
## THE STATE WE'RE IN

State of the city: wet, congested, hard up. You got your rain, your traffic, your budget problems, plus Latrell on the block and twenty-minute delays on the Ronkonkoma line of the L.I.R.R. The usual stuff.

Gifford Miller, the City Council Speaker, who is just thirty-three but is often described as the second-most-powerful elected official in town, had a different set of observations to pass along last Tuesday, in his State of the City address to Council colleagues and invited guests. In the lineup of "State of" speeches, the City Council model comes late and ranks low; not only is there the State of the Union and the State of the State but the Mayor (the first-most-powerful elected official in town) gives a State of the City address of his own, in January—and, really, how many states can a city be in? Miller's performance, though, had some of the trappings of stateliness. The crowd in the Council Chambers, at City Hall, was more raucous than usual, and for the first time in recent memory someone had hung bunting from the balcony railing. Miller's parents were in attendance. Behind the Speaker was a blue backdrop adorned, Bush style, with the slogan "A Fair Share for NYC." It might as well have read "Miller for Mayor in 2005."

His topic, generally, was the city's dire fiscal situation—this year's projected budget deficit is $3.4 billion—and his beef was familiar but apt. "Just last year, New York City sent Washington $6.3 billion more than we got back, and we sent Albany $3.5 billion more than we got back," he said. "Simply put: we pay more than our fair share, we get back *less* than our fair share. . . . It's been going on too long, it's wrong, and it's time we put an end to it." He proceeded to light into the President, and then the Governor, for shunning the city in its time of need. "Mr. President and Governor Pataki: Something's got to give." And so on.

Miller's attack on Pataki stood in

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contrast to another indicator that day of the state of the city, which could be found on page B8 of the morning's *Times:* a photograph of Mayor Bloomberg, reaching up—way up—to shake the hand of a state assemblyman from Troy, who smiled down from his legislative perch. The Mayor looks small and meek, a provincial supplicant in the august chambers of the capitol. At the time, Bloomberg ("Gloomberg," the *Post* has called him) was making the rounds in Albany, hoping to persuade lawmakers to throw a little extra money the city's way, or, at least, allow the city to raise some money itself by, among other things, restoring the commuter tax. He got nowhere. (The state's budget deficit this year is projected to be $9.3 billion. The state's state, in other words, is as bad as the city's.)

Bloomberg's strategy has been to remain courteous and deferential in his dealings with the Governor. And there are many ways of being courteous when you're a billionaire mayor. Bloomberg has invested more than a million dollars of his own in Pataki in the past eighteen months. He has donated $1.2 million to Pataki and the state G.O.P., flown him around on his private jet, and lent him his town house for two fundraisers. Yet the Governor has done almost nothing to help the city out of its predicament. In fact, the Governor's new budget could deprive it of as much as $2 billion. Though no one has yet devised a conversion rate for billionaire-mayor dollars and taxpayer dollars, it's safe to say that Bloomberg has probably never seen such a lousy return on an investment.

"That sounds like a hedge-fund return," Jim Grant, the editor of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer*, said last week when he was asked to consider this new approach to governance. "It is possible to lose much more than you invested if you have borrowed against it and levered it, as Long-Term Capital did. This is something only the very rich can do. You know, it reminds me of this three-hundred-million-dollar hedge fund in Tokyo that blew up a few weeks ago. Its name is Eifuku, which supposedly means 'good fortune,' but if you spell it out phonetically, what you see is something else."

—*Nick Paumgarten*

## ICE TIME
## THE BRONX LUGE

It's not often that weather conditions in New York City are conducive to Olympic events like the luge, but the recent cold spell coincided neatly with a visit from Gordy Sheer, a silver-medallist "slider" in Nagano, to Van Cortlandt Park, in the Bronx. As part of the city's 2003 Winter Festival, Sheer had agreed to offer free luge lessons, so, on one of the coldest days of the season, he drove his Chevy Express van (license plate: USA LUGE) to the foot of Van Cortlandt's Cass Gallagher Nature Trail, a wooded path carved out of what the park's Web site calls "rock outcroppings that are links to the last ice age," and began laying out a course. All in all, it was a nice choice of location, even taking into account that the sleds he'd brought with him had wheels rather than blades.

Sheer assembled a portable plywood ramp—five feet high and twelve feet long—about two hundred feet up the trail's paved access road, and lined the slope below with pairs of fluorescent yellow cones. Up the hill, behind the ramp, Parks Department employees dispensed hot chocolate.

After an hour, only one family had braved the cold, taking first the train, and then the bus, up from Inwood. The mother, Barbara, sat huddled on a rock and blew into her hands, while Sheer handed out helmets to Carlos (the father), Jack (the uncle), and Brandon (the nine-year-old son), and explained the basics: lie down on the sled, face up, feet first, arms at your sides; turn right, say, by pointing lightly across your body with your left foot and shifting your weight slightly to your right shoulder (imagine lying, shackled, in a bed, and attempting to roll over); stop by dropping your feet onto the pavement and absorbing the momentum with your legs. (In this last respect, perhaps more than in any other, the Bronx luge differed from the real deal: on ice there are no brakes, and only two ways to stop—crash or wait for an incline.)

Jack went first, slaloming through the cones. At the bottom, he raised his arms in triumph.

"Be confident, Brandon!" Carlos shouted, as his son fastened the chin strap on his helmet and mounted the ramp. "It's just like skateboarding. Remember when you used a big skateboard?" Brandon nodded. "It's a big skateboard."

Not exactly. Sheer gave Brandon a light push, and down the ramp he went—directly into the first cone on the right.

"Everybody makes mistakes," Barbara said.

Carlos was next. He headed straight for the woods on the left, then jerked sharply to the right just in time to avert a collision with a sturdy red oak. When he reached the opposite side, he repeated the maneuver.

Barbara looked at Sheer. "You won a silver medal, right?"

After several more runs, Carlos complained that the rubber soles on his shoes were wearing out.

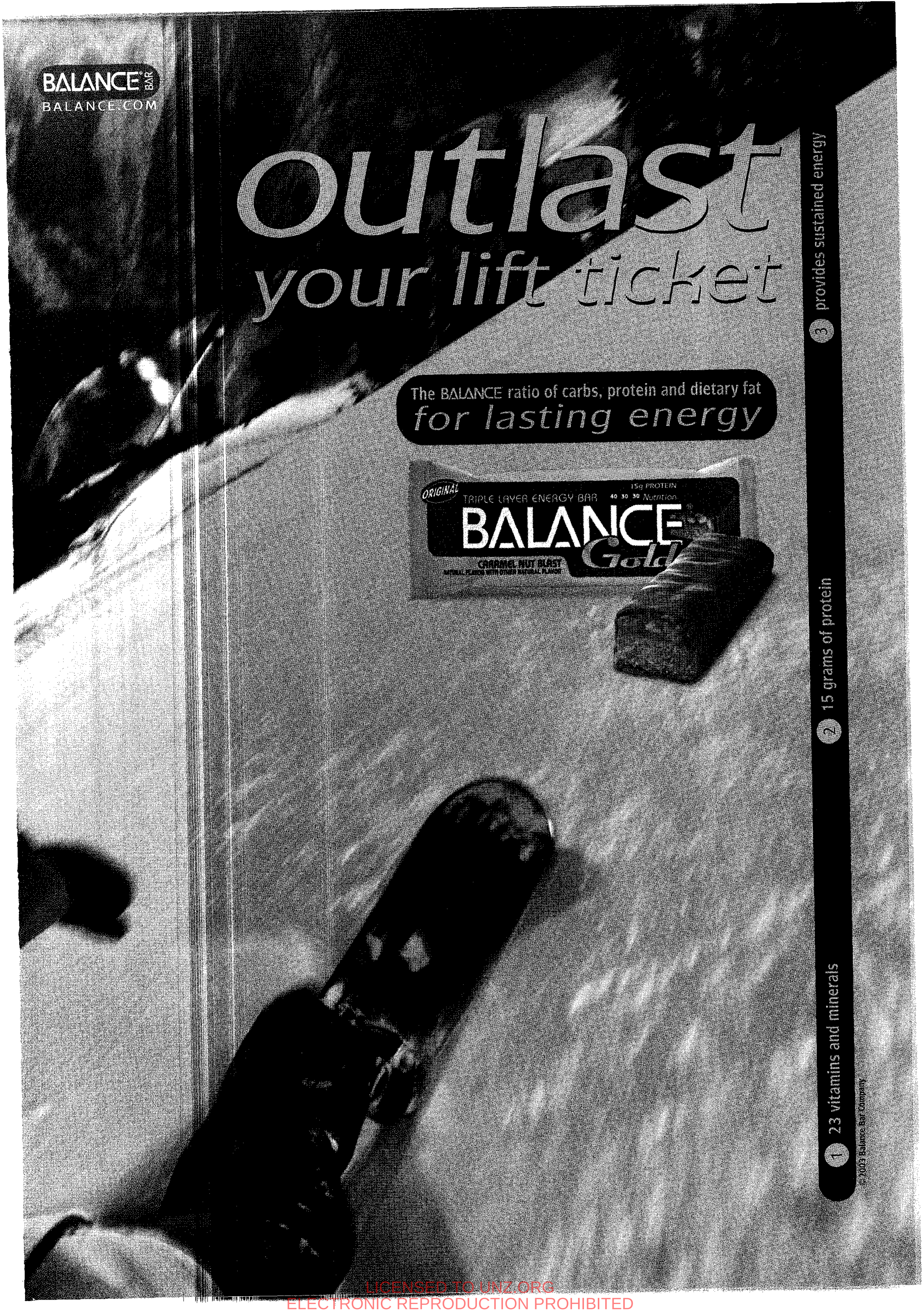
A middle-aged woman, bundled up in a yellow parka, emerged from the wooded trail above the course. "Is this where you learn about the luge?" she asked. "I want to learn about the luge."

The woman, whose name was Catherine, was a lifelong Bronx resident, and as Sheer added bales of hay to the spaces between the cones, to serve as bumpers (or to reinforce the idea that the proper course was a straight shot down the middle), she reminisced about Van Cortlandt Park's previous incarnation as the city's winter-sports hub. "I remember when there used to be downhill skiing here, back in the sixties," she said. "It was over on the golf course, by the sixteenth hole." She gestured quickly behind her, up the hill and to the east, and then tucked her hands back into her jacket pockets. "They used to make snow and have a tow rope and everything. It was very steep, and I remember in the mornings they would line up ambulances at the foot of the slope. When I saw those ambulances, I knew skiing wasn't for me."

Brandon towed his sled to the top of the wooden platform again, and lay down. "You can do it!" Carlos called out. The sled accelerated down the ramp, already pointing left before the wheels touched asphalt—and crashed into the first bale of hay, a couple of dozen feet away.

"I don't think I'm going to try it," Catherine said. She headed up the hill for a cup of hot chocolate.

—*Ben McGrath*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## THE FINANCIAL PAGE

# THE WAY WE WATCH

In the next few weeks, Trista the bachelorette will finally choose her man, Joe Millionaire will come clean, Demi Moore will play an ex-babysitter on "Will & Grace," and "Dateline NBC" will devote a full, solemn hour to the medical marvel that is Michael Jackson's face. And to what do TV viewers owe such munificence? To the advertisers' hunger for information about who watches what, a hunger that manifests itself, four times a year, in a monthlong viewer-data harvest known as "sweeps."

When advertisers are deciding which shows to buy time on, they want to know not just how many people are watching but what kinds of people, too. So Nielsen Media Research has wired five thousand American homes with electronic "people meters," which enable it to collect national ratings and demographic information on behalf of the major networks. The networks, in turn, use that information to sell national advertising.

Not all the ads you see are national, though. A sizable percentage are tailored to local markets—think Fudgie the Whale or Wiz Bucks, in New York—and local advertisers also need demographic information. The problem is that Nielsen doesn't have people meters in each of America's two hundred and ten television markets. So those people meters don't tell local advertisers what local folks are watching.

This is where sweeps come in. The sweeps system, which originated in radio, has been around for almost fifty years, and it shows. Every February, May, July, and November, Nielsen sends out 2.5 million paper "diaries" to randomly selected people in almost every TV market in the country and asks them to record, for a week, what programs they watch. The networks' local stations—the affiliates—and local advertisers then use the information from those diaries to negotiate ad rates for the months ahead. Each year, sweeps determine how more than twenty billion dollars in ad money gets spent.

There are three important things to know about sweeps. The first is that they are deeply flawed, and of little use, in the end, to the networks, the advertisers, and the viewers. The second is that everyone in television knows this. The third is that no one has done anything about it. "They're just an unwelcome phenomenon we have to deal with every three months," David Poltrack, the head of research at CBS, says. "I don't know anyone who thinks they're good for the business. But, for now, we're stuck with them."

What's wrong with them? To begin with, they force the networks to rely on "stunt" programming—to pack their schedules with outrageous specials, celebrity appearances, and expensive movies. The more juicy stuff the networks pack into sweeps months, the less they can afford to put on during the rest of the year.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Advertisers, for their part, wind up paying for ratings that often reflect only this stunt programming. "Because the networks and the local stations are so savvy at hyping the ratings, sweeps are a sham, a subterfuge," Allen Banks, executive media director at Saatchi & Saatchi, North America, says. "The picture they give you is anything but typical of what's going on the rest of the year." The diaries are faulty, too: only a third of those which Nielsen distributes get filled out, which raises the problem of what's known as "coöperator bias"—the kinds of people who are likely to fill them out may watch different shows than the rest of us do. Also, people often fill them out days later, and who remembers what they watched last Thursday? (Um . . . "E.R."?) The diaries are also no good at chronicling the restless viewing habits of channel surfers. For advertisers, though, flimsy data beats no data at all.

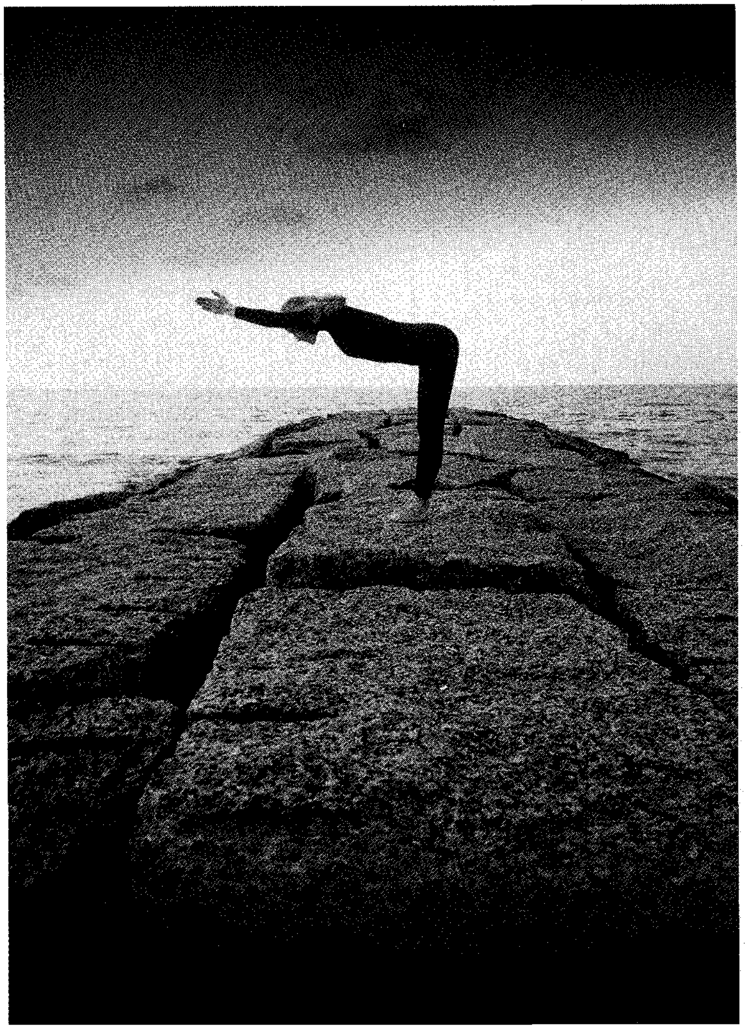
The obvious alternative would be those Nielsen people meters, which require no longhand and no memory and track in real time what people are watching. So why doesn't the TV industry switch over? The impediment is what the late economist Mancur Olson called the problem of collective action, a phenomenon familiar to anyone who has ever tried to get neighbors to pitch in on building a fence. Almost all the players in the TV business would be better off if they got rid of sweeps, but people meters are expensive, and no single player would benefit enough to justify spending the money it would take to set them up nationwide. Everyone waits for someone else to take care of it, holding out for a free ride. So nothing gets done.

There is one constituency that still likes sweeps: the affiliates, who wield an inordinate amount of power in the TV world. The diary system favors recognizable names and networks. "The affiliates' ratings are likely higher under the current system than they would be under a different system," Poltrack says, "so they have no incentive to change." Indeed, whenever people meters have been introduced, the affiliates have wound up with worse ratings.

And so we have the curious spectacle of multinational media conglomerates like Viacom and Disney bowing to the needs of little stations in Fort Wayne and Sioux Falls. Such local influence recalls the automobile business. Auto dealers like to have full lots, so the big automakers have to carry months of inventory. The dealers don't like competition, so the automakers are prevented by law, in most states, from selling to customers directly. As a result, the automakers have had a hard time adopting just-in-time or build-to-order manufacturing; their way of making and selling cars has scarcely changed since the days of Henry Ford. Similarly, the TV networks are stuck in an arrangement that dates back to Milton Berle. "In an ideal world, we'd have one rating that measures what people all over the country are really watching," Banks says. "Quite frankly, it'll never happen." The television will not be revolutionized.

—*James Surowiecki*

MONEY MANAGEMENT IS WHAT WE DO.*



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### LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

# AFTER IRAQ

*The plan to remake the Middle East.*

### BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

Has a war ever been as elaborately justified in advance as the coming war with Iraq? Because this war is not being undertaken in direct response to a single shattering event (it's been nearly a year and a half since the September 11th attacks), and because the possibility of military action against Saddam Hussein has been Washington's main preoccupation for the better part of a year, the case for war has grown so large and variegated that its very multiplicity has become a part of the case against it. In his State of the Union address, President Bush offered at least four justifications, none of them overlapping: the cruelty of Saddam against his own people; his flouting of treaties and United Nations Security Council resolutions; the military threat that he poses to his neighbors; and his ties to terrorists in general and to Al Qaeda in particular. In addition, Bush hinted at the possibility that Saddam might attack the United States or enable someone else to do so. There are so many reasons for going to war floating around—at least some of which, taken alone, either are nothing new or do not seem to point to Iraq specifically as the obvious place to wage it—that those inclined to suspect the motives of the Administration have plenty of material with which to argue that it is being disingenuous. So, along with all the stated reasons, there is a brisk secondary traffic in "real" reasons, which are similarly numerous and do not overlap: the country is going to war because of a desire to control Iraqi oil, or to help Israel, or to avenge Saddam's 1993 assassination attempt on President George H. W. Bush.

Yet another argument for war, which has emerged during the last few months, is that removing Saddam could help bring about a wholesale change for the better in the political, cultural, and economic climate of the Arab Middle East. To give one of many possible examples, Fouad Ajami, an expert on the Arab world who is highly respected inside the Bush Administration, proposes in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs* that the United States might lead "a reformist project that seeks to modernize and transform the Arab landscape. Iraq would be the starting point, and beyond Iraq lies an Arab political and economic tradition and a culture whose agonies have been on cruel display." The Administration's main public proponent of this view is Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, who often speaks about the possibility that war in Iraq could help bring democracy to the Arab Middle East. President Bush appeared to be making the same point in the State of the Union address when he remarked that "all people have a right to choose their own government, and determine their own destiny—and the United States supports their aspirations to live in freedom."

Even those suffering from justification fatigue ought to pay special attention to this one, because it goes beyond the category of reasons offered in support of a course of action that has already been decided upon and set in motion. Unlike the other justifications, it is both a reason for war and a plan for the future. It also cries out for elaboration. Democracy is a wonderful idea, but none of the countries in the Middle East, except Israel and Turkey, resemble anything that would look like a democracy to Americans. Some Middle Eastern countries are now and have always been ruled by monarchs. Some are under the control of an ethnic or religious group that represents a minority of the population. Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are the world's only major nations named after a single family, and in Saudi Arabia the royal family functions as, in effect, the country's owner. Most Middle Eastern

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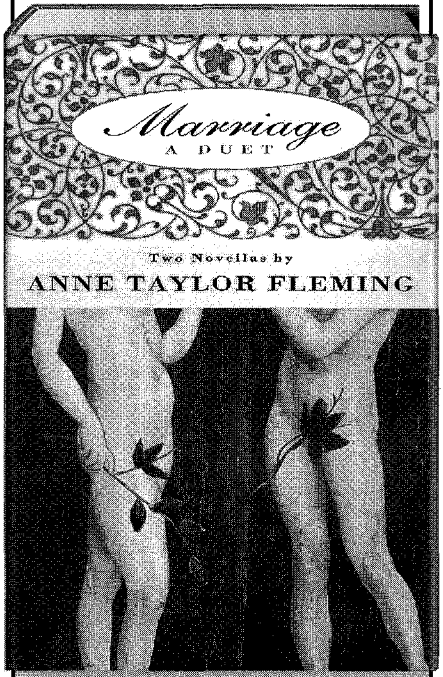

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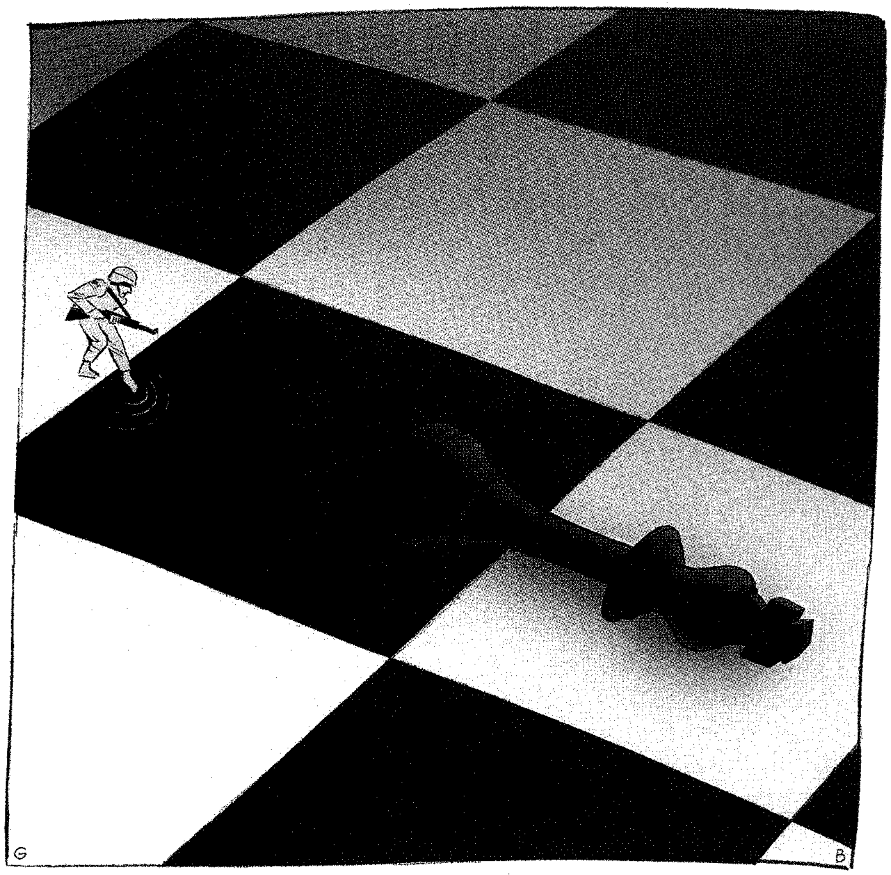
countries don't even make the pretense of having freely elected parliaments; in Iran, for example, candidates have to be approved by the mullahs. And the very problem that democracy in the Middle East is meant to solve—rising Islamic radicalism, encouraged or tolerated by governments that see it as a way to propitiate their increasingly poorer and younger populations—makes the prospect of elections dangerous, because anti-American Islamists might win.



*The Administration sees another reason to remove Saddam.*

GUY BILLOUT

People in the Administration are quick to explain that, where the Middle East is concerned, they don't mean immediate, American-style electoral democracy but, rather, a deliberate building of "civil society" or "democratic institutions," like a free press, political parties, open markets, and a system of written laws and courts that administer them, with national parliamentary elections as the final, and somewhat distant, step. That seems a worthwhile project, but if it takes place in the aftermath of a war it should be understood as involving the making of choices and the use of power by the United States, rather than merely polite encouragement. In search of a plausible scenario for the postwar future of the Middle East, I recently spoke with two Pentagon officials who have a reputation as leading hawks in the Administration: Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy, which is the job that Wolfowitz held in the first Bush Administration; and Stephen Cambone, who entered this Administration as Feith's deputy, and is now in charge of evaluating weapons systems and other Pentagon programs.

Feith, a crisp, bespectacled man in his late forties, works in a large suite of offices in the E Ring of the Pentagon, with a sweeping view across the Potomac River to Washington. The door to his reception room is kept locked, which underscores the impression that business unknown to the public is conducted within. Feith bustled in from another appointment, and we sat down. I asked him what he thought the aftereffects of the war would be. He smiled amiably and said, "Walking you through exactly what is going to happen is difficult. I think it was Samuel Goldwyn who once said never make forecasts, especially about the future. So I don't think I want to attempt to walk you through exactly how it's going to play out. But I can tell you what I know about some of the thinking on the subject."

He went on, "The nineteen-eighties and nineties saw the spread of democratic government to a lot of countries in the world, including in regions that did not have a lot of experience with democratic government, and I think it helped strengthen the idea that some of the basic institutions of democracy—not any particular democratic system, but some of the basic institutions of democracy—had universal appeal. Even people who have a proper respect for the conservative insights of Edmund Burke were impressed by the ability of all kinds of countries in Asia and Latin America to create institutions of democracy. I use the term 'institutions of democracy' carefully. I don't like to talk just about 'democracy,' because that connotes that there's a particular system that works for everybody, and I'm too much a respecter of Burke to assert that." He paused and said, "But the notion that when you have governmental institutions that are free, and allow for a greater degree of political and economic freedom, and people are protected from tyranny by having multiple institutions in their society that have power—the principle of checks and balances—it leaves open a tremendous amount of room for how societies organize their governments, and their societies in general. The notion of checks and balances as a safeguard against tyranny is something that I think can have applicability all around the world. It's not peculiar to a particular culture.

"Then, you have the phenomenon that this greater freedom that came to Latin America, that came to various parts of Asia, largely missed the Middle East. And there is all kinds of writing on the subject, on whether there is anything inherently incompatible between either Muslim culture, or Arab culture, and this kind of freer government. This Administration does not believe there is an inherent incompatibility. And if Iraq had a government like that, and if that government could create some of those institutions of democracy, that might be inspirational for people throughout the Middle East to try to increase the

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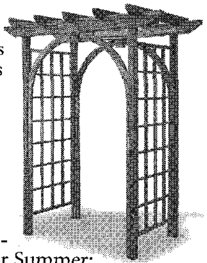

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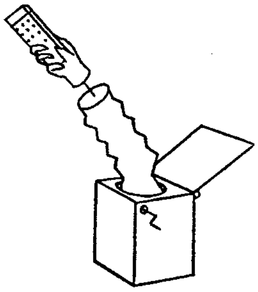
amount of freedom that they have, and they would benefit both politically and economically by doing so."

I asked him how this would happen. Would the American ambassador in every country in the region be dispatched to urge the head of state to embrace democracy? "The mechanism that you described is not the mechanism that anybody has in mind, as far as I know," Feith said. "We're not talking about having American ambassadors go around saying, 'Look at this nice government that's just been created in Iraq,' and we, like a travelling salesman, go to some other country and say, 'How about if you buy a knockoff?' That's not what we're proposing.

"There are people throughout the Middle East who have *interests* in promoting greater freedom," he went on. "You have various people in various countries who have an interest in improving their country. And if there were to be a model of political success along these lines in the Middle East, in Iraq, one can imagine it would be impressive and influential. If somebody elsewhere in the Middle East looks at this and says, 'If the Iraqis can have these benefits, perhaps we can get some of these benefits for our own people,' I think that's really more the mechanism." Though Feith was putting it gently, this is a formulation stating that a change of regime might not be a bad thing for other countries in the region besides Iraq.



I asked Feith whether an American military victory in Iraq could help curb terrorism by organizations like Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, which operate with the support of other countries in the region. He nodded. "One of the principal strategic thoughts underlying our strategy in the war on terrorism is the importance of the connection between terrorist organizations and their state sponsors," he said. "Terrorist organizations cannot be effective in sustaining themselves over long periods of time to do large-scale operations if they don't have support from states. They need a base of operations. They need other types of assets that they get from their connection with their state sponsors—whether it's funding, or headquarters, or, in some cases, the use of diplomatic pouches and other types of facilities. And one of the principal reasons that we are focussed on Iraq as a threat to us and to our interests is because we are focussed on this connection between three things: terrorist organizations, state sponsors, and weapons of mass destruction. If we were to take military action and vindicate our principles, in the war on terrorism, against Iraq, I think it would"—he paused, looking for the right word—"*register* with other countries around the world that are sponsoring terrorism, and would perhaps change their own cost-benefit calculations about their role in connection with terrorist networks. I think this process got under way with Afghanistan. There you had a regime that was *ousted* because of its support for terrorist operations against the United States. If the Iraqi regime gets ousted because it ultimately proves unwilling to disarm itself in a coöperative fashion with the U.N., and if the United States leads a coalition and overthrows that government, I think that the combination of those two actions will influence the thinking of other states about how *advisable* it is for them to continue to provide safe harbor or other types of support to terrorist organizations."

Because they'd think they might be ousted next? "Perhaps," Feith said. "Or just because—I think that we may be on the way to creating a new international way of thinking, a new international norm, about terrorism. If you look at the national-security-strategy document that the White House put out, it says that our goal is to make terrorism like piracy, the slave trade, or genocide in the minds of people around the world. It is to delegitimate terrorism as an activity, as a practice. This can't be done solely by military means, but it is interesting how military action sometimes reinforces philosophical messages."

I asked Feith whether the United States, if it goes to war, would be doing so partly because it wants to change the Middle East as a whole. "Perhaps I should put it this way," he said. "Would anybody be thinking about using mili-

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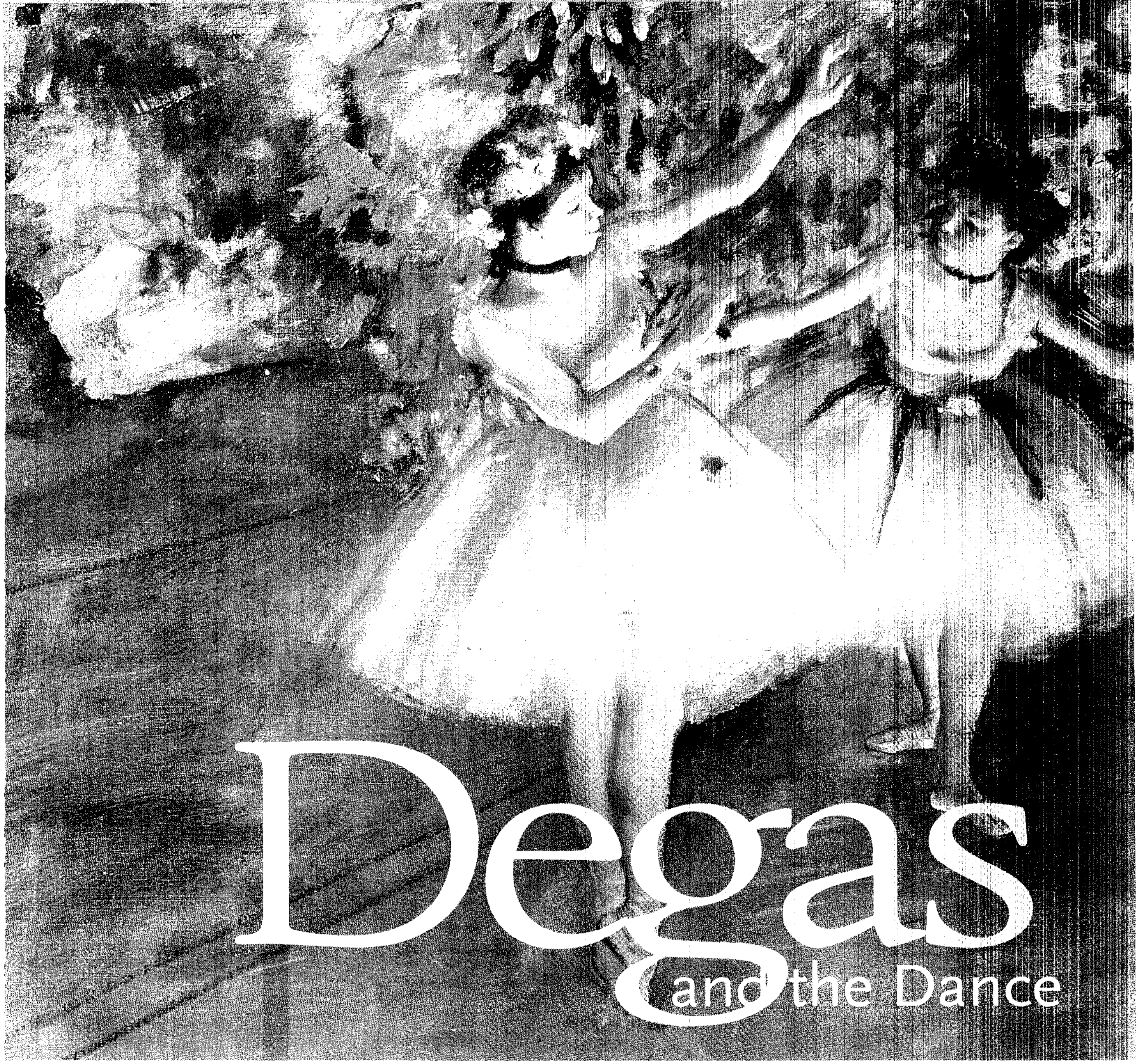

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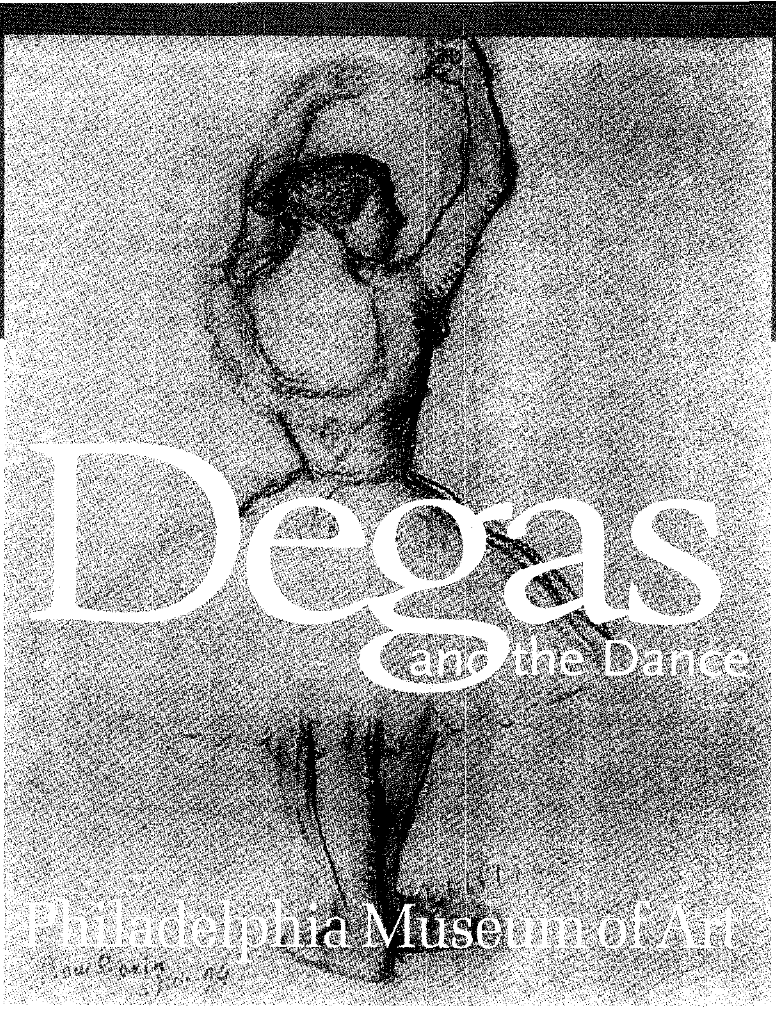

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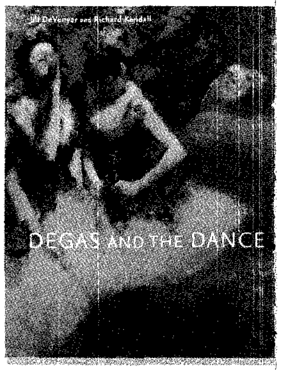

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tary power in Iraq in order to do a political experiment in Iraq in the hope that it would have positive political spillover effects throughout the region? The answer is no. That's not the kind of thing that leads a country like the United States to commit the kind of military forces that we're committing to this effort—right now, to try to make our diplomacy work, but ultimately, perhaps, if the diplomacy doesn't work, to take military action. There's no way. What we would be using military power for, if we have to, would be the goals the President has talked about, particularly the elimination of the chemical and biological weapons, and preventing Iraq from getting nuclear weapons." He paused for a moment. "Now. Once you contemplate using military force for that purpose, and you're thinking about what do you do afterward, that's when you can think that if we do things right, and if we help the Iraqis, and if the Iraqis show an ability to create a humane representative government for themselves—will that have beneficial spillover effects on the politics of the whole region? The answer, I think, is yes."

I asked Feith about the prospects for a few specific countries besides Iraq. Might there be regime change in Iran, for example? "Sure," he said. "Sure. Not every government that falls around the world is connected to the war on terrorism. There were governments falling for millennia—before the United States came along, before the war on terrorism. There are all kinds of reasons that governments fall. And it is clear that the Iranian government is very unpopular. And the clerics in the regime are corrupt. And the population is very young throughout the country. I forget the exact numbers, but I think more than half the people in the country were born after the Khomeini revolution. So there are people who believe that the Iranian government is not going to have a tenure that goes out into the indefinite future, because they're very unpopular with their people."

Would he be willing to say anything about the future of the government of Syria, which may be the world's leading haven for terrorist organizations, since it openly plays host to Islamic

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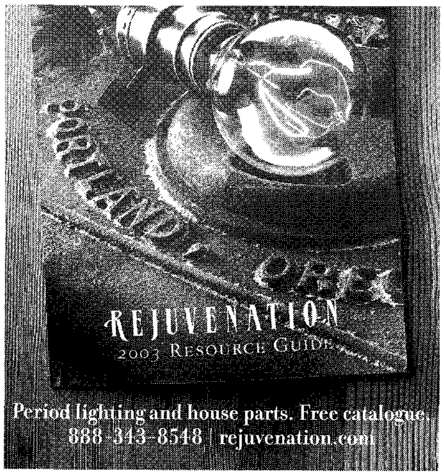

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Jihad, in Damascus, and Hezbollah, in Lebanon? He smiled. “Not on the record,” he said.

Stephen Cambone, who has an E Ring office that is somewhat smaller than Feith’s, is big and athletic-looking, and he speaks more guardedly than Feith does—almost in code, rather than in Feith’s full, elegant sentences. When I asked him how an American victory in Iraq might affect other Middle Eastern countries, he said, “The leadership in the countries in that region is changing. You’ve seen changes in Syria, you’ve seen them in Jordan; there will, over some period of time, be changes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and other places. The Palestinians. The way in which Iraq affects the calculations of those governments and their populations.” How does Iraq affect their calculations? He mentioned the “transshipment of oil, and illicit flows, and trade coming in that you try to avoid sanctions against,” which produce an “undercutting, or undermining, of what would otherwise be the standard and ordinary relationships among states which would otherwise have their relationship based on mutual interest.” He added, “Because Iraq is not a normal state, it is dysfunctional with respect to the politics of the region, and that, in turn, has profound effects on the internal politics of the individual states.” Cambone seemed to be referring specifically to the relationship between Syria and Iraq: the Iraqis provide oil to the Syrians, supposedly well in excess of the quantities permitted under United Nations sanctions, and get Syrian money and support in return. Jordan is also dependent on Iraqi oil, which means that its government has to tolerate Saddam’s political wooing of the country’s Palestinian majority. If Iraqi oil came with different ideological strings attached, these governments might feel freer to resist Islamic radicalism openly.

Will there be further regime changes in the Middle East? “Things won’t be the same after as they were before,” Cambone said. “Just by virtue of the event occurring, people making commitments. So should a conflict, and I underline *should*, *if*, *maybe*— There is a prospect that things, yeah, I think things could change in many of those places. Now, things could also go badly. One should not discount, for all that one can imagine good things happening, the prospect that things that would not be helpful or positive could occur, too”—especially, he added, if the United States and its allies do not manage the postwar period adeptly. Is the hope of effecting secondary changes part of the motivation for war? Cambone thought for a long moment. “Hmm. I don’t know how to answer that.” He stopped again, and finally, deliberately, said, “There is no lack of reflection on what the consequences either of the regime persisting or of its being gone might be. That is all part and parcel of how one thinks through the problem.”

It is understandable that people in positions like Feith’s and Cambone’s have to speak very carefully. One can, however, get a sense from other sources of at least one version of a remade Middle East. Lately, Washington hawk-watchers have been passing around a document called “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm,” which was written in 1996, by an eight-member committee, as advice for Benjamin Netanyahu, the newly elected Israeli Prime Minister. The head of the committee was Richard Perle, who is probably Washington’s leading vocal advocate of regime change in Iraq; another committee member was Douglas Feith. The title refers to a foreign policy for Israel that would deëmphasize the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians and move “to a traditional concept of strategy based on balance of power.” One important item in the strategy, the paper strongly implies, would be getting Saddam Hussein out of power in Iraq.

Another member of the committee was David Wurmser, who is now a senior adviser to John Bolton, the Under-Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, and the State Department’s most hawkish senior official. In 1999, Wurmser published a book (with a foreword by Richard Perle) called “Tyranny’s Ally: America’s Failure to Defeat Saddam Hussein.” It provides a detailed description of a dramatically improved Middle East, from the hawk point of view, after regime change in Iraq. Although Wurmser certainly doesn’t lack moral fervor, he is a strategic thinker who wants to realign the power relationships in the region. For Wurmser, the larger enemy is the ideology of Pan-Arabism, which he presents as the Middle East’s version of the various forms of totalitarianism that swept across Europe in the twentieth century. The true choice in the region is between “the traditional Arab elite and revolutionary Arab nationalists.” In the latter category are Saddam

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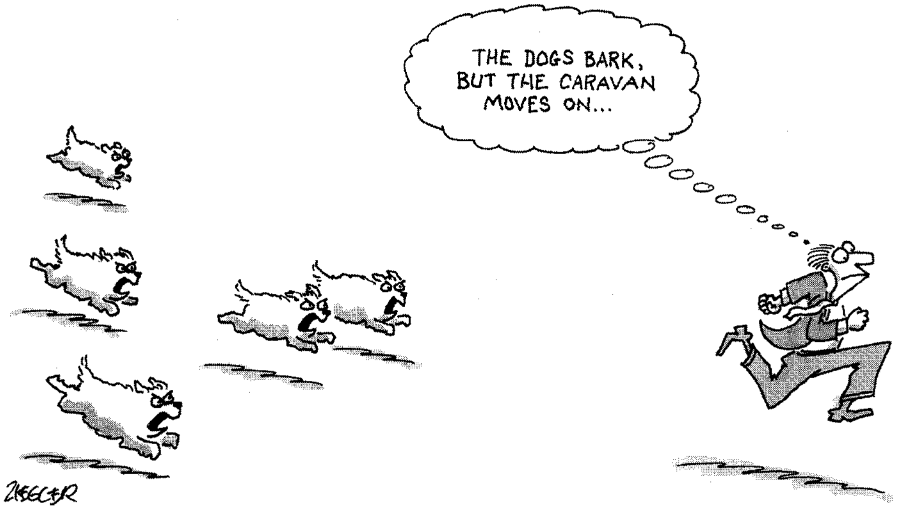
Hussein, the Assad family of Syria (who, like Saddam, subscribe to the Pan-Arabist ideology of Baathism), and the mullahs of Iran—even though those countries have, at times, been mortal enemies. Bringing down Saddam, Wurmser predicts, would have the happy effect of destabilizing both Syria and Iran. "A collapse in either Syria or Iraq would affect the other profoundly," he writes. "Ideologically, a failure of Ba'thism in one implicitly indicts the regime of the other as well." As for Iran: "Launching a policy and resolutely carrying it through until it razes Saddam's Ba'thism to the ground will send terrifying shock waves into Teheran." In Wurmser's scenario, a post-Saddam government in Iraq that includes meaningful participation by Iraq's Shiite majority will remove the Iranian mullahs' most powerful claim to legitimacy, which is that they represent the only regional power center for Shiites. (It's a sign of how rapidly Washington opinion has moved that, writing only four years ago, even Wurmser considered it inadvisable for the United States "to go to war solo, to liberate and occupy an Arab capital," and recommended the empowerment of the Iraqi National Congress to overthrow Saddam.)

One can easily derive from Wurmser's book a crisp series of post-Saddam moves across the chessboard of the Middle East. The regime in Iran would either fall or be eased out of power by an alliance of the radical students and the more moderate mullahs, with the United States doing what it could to encourage the process. After regime change, the United States would persuade Iran to end its nuclear-weapons program and its support for terrorists elsewhere in the Middle East, especially Hezbollah. Syria, now surrounded by the pro-American powers of Turkey, the reconfigured Iraq, Jordan, and Israel, and no longer dependent on Saddam for oil, could be pressured to coöperate with efforts to clean out Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah. As Syria moved to a more pro-American stand, so would its client state, Lebanon. That would leave Hezbollah, which has its headquarters in Lebanon, without state support. The Palestinian Authority, with most of its regional allies stripped away, would have no choice but to renounce terrorism categorically. Saudi Arabia would have much less sway over the United States because it would no longer be America's only major source of oil and base of military operations in the region, and so it might finally be persuaded to stop funding Hamas and Al Qaeda through Islamic charities.

A few things should be said about this vision of the near-term future in the Middle East. It is breathtakingly ambitious and optimistic. It might plausibly be described as a spreading of democracy but, perhaps more important, it would also involve, as the "Clean Break" paper said, forcefully altering the regional balance of power. And it differs greatly from the vision of the future of the Middle East that will prevail among liberals, both here and abroad, after the war in Iraq. It treats Pan-Arab nationalism as illegitimate. It does not accept the widespread assumption that no regional good can follow the fall of Saddam unless peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority begin immediately. And it sees the fall of Saddam Hussein less as the end of a great diplomatic and military effort than as a step in an ongoing process.

The chances that President Bush has read David Wurmser's book must be pretty close to zero. But in the State of the Union address Bush rhetorically made some room for the United States to pursue an aggressive post-Iraq-war agenda in the Middle East. Washington was, understandably, so focussed on how Bush would "make the case" for war with Iraq that the State of the Union's foreign-policy doctrinal material, which preceded Bush's discussion of Saddam Hussein, got almost no attention. The news about that section of the speech is that Bush defined the United States' mission more broadly than he ever has before. This mission, he said, is not just protecting the country from terrorist attacks, and not just ridding the world of "every terrorist group of global reach" (the previous formulation, which he unveiled in his speech on September 20, 2001), but "confronting and defeating the man-made evil of international terrorism." By dropping the qualifying clause "of global reach," he gave the United States enough doctrinal space to declare war, if it wishes, on purely regional overseas terrorist organizations, like Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs. Bush made it clear that he considers killing terrorists to be well within the United States' charter, and that the support of allies is not a necessary precondition of American military action overseas. States "that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons"—a category that clearly includes Iran and (if you take out nuclear weapons) Syria—have sacrificed their right to sovereignty. It is the United States' duty and its responsibility not just to protect itself but also to spread liberty, which is "God's gift to humanity," to every nation, to bring about "the end of terrible threats to the civilized world," and to be the guarantor of "the hopes of all mankind."

What these phrases will mean for the Middle East, precisely, is hard to say, because war leads to so many unpredictable consequences. But what they will mean in Washington couldn't be clearer. After the war in Iraq has ended, the war between the hawks and the doves will continue. ♦


THE DOGS BARK, BUT THE CARAVAN MOVES ON...
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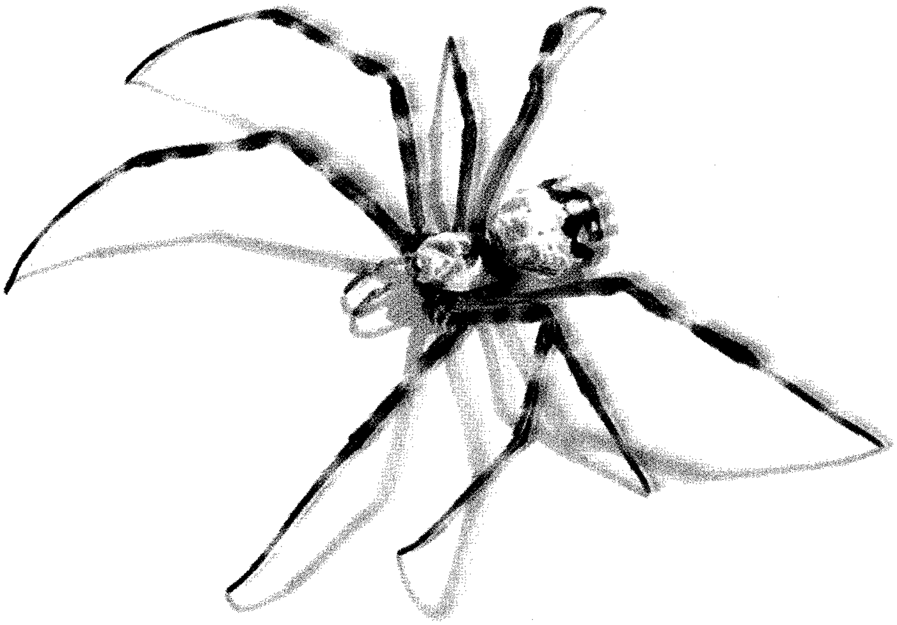

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### DEPT. OF GENDER POLITICS

# CLUB RULES

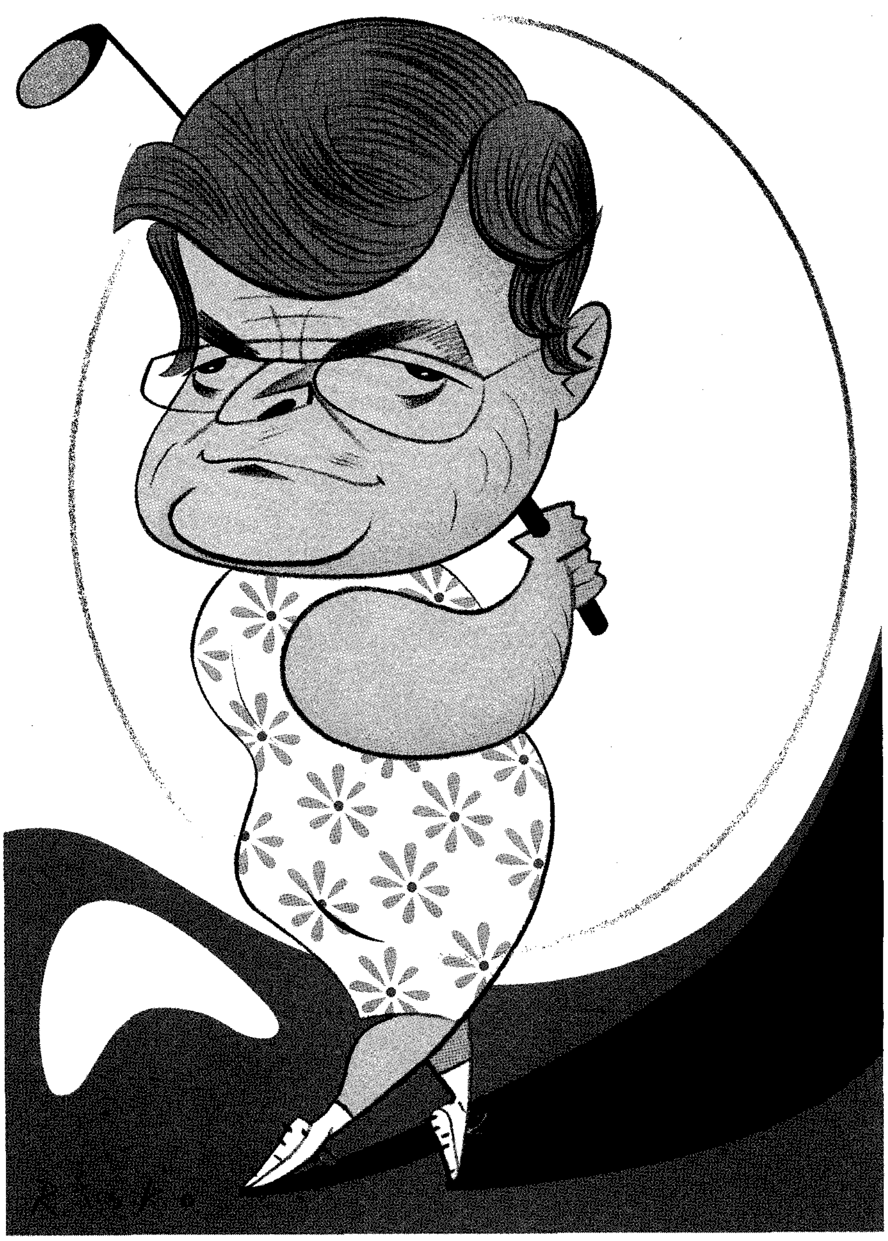
*The antagonists in the Augusta controversy are more complicated than you'd think.*

### BY PETER J. BOYER

In early winter, the course at the Augusta National Golf Club bears a faint promise of the Oz-like spectacle of magnolias, azaleas, and piercing green rye that it will become in April, when the club conducts its annual Masters tournament. In December, the Bermuda on the fairways is going dormant and brown, creating a seed base for the rye that was planted in the fall; the azaleas are sleeping, and the East Georgia weather can be gray and raw. It was on such a day that I visited the club this winter, and, except for a foursome efficiently making its way to the green at No. 9, there was scarcely a golfer in sight. One of the charms of membership at Augusta National is that, during the season, from October until the end of May, the grand old course is always available for play. The club, which is a hundred and forty miles east of Atlanta, has some three hundred members, and, as most of them reside elsewhere (a third of them live in the New York area, California, and Florida), there is never any difficulty securing a tee time. In fact, there are no tee times at Augusta National, as such; players stroll from the clubhouse to the first tee, as they wish. "There's never anybody there," a New York member told me. "It's perfect."

Shortly before noon, I was escorted up a spiral staircase into the club's library, a room that, a few months hence, will be the scene of one of the rarest gatherings in sports. On the Tuesday evening of tournament week, April 8th, Tiger Woods will preside over the annual meeting of the Masters Club, a dinner hosted by the defending tournament champion to which only past Masters winners are invited. The Augusta National has through the decades cultivated a museum-like air; the walls of the hundred-and-fifty-year-old building that houses the club are covered with portraits of golf totems (some painted by Dwight Eisenhower, who was a member), and mahogany-and-glass cabinets hold such treasures as the wood-shafted sticks used by one of the club's founders, Bobby Jones, when he won golf's Grand Slam in 1930. Woods hosted the dinner last year, and, at twenty-six, he was by a decade the youngest man in the group; the oldest was ninety-year-old Byron Nelson, who won the first of his two Masters tournaments in 1937.

The Masters is golf's most esteemed event, and, for Woods especially, Augusta has been a watershed venue. He won his first major title at the Masters in 1997, at the age of twenty-one, and he did so in a fashion that suggested the arrival of the greatest golfing talent since Jones himself. In becoming the youngest Masters champion, Woods embarrassed the old course, as well as the rest of the field, setting tournament records for the lowest score—270—and the widest margin of victory: twelve strokes. (Partly in response, the club undertook a significant design change, adding length to several holes.) But the lasting meaning of Woods' victory was sociological: his arrival as golf's dominant player came just seven years after Augusta National accepted its first black member.



*Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson proved himself the perfect adversary.*

As Woods prepares to defend his Masters title this spring, he has much at stake, including his hope of becoming the first player to win three consecutive tournaments at Augusta. Once again, the golf itself may seem almost an afterthought. Woods is already resigned to the fact that the big story at Augusta this year will be the controversy over the club's exclusion of women from its membership, a dispute instigated by Martha Burk, a feminist activist based in Washington, who has been campaigning against the club since the summer. Burk insists that she will not relent until Augusta National admits a woman member, and the club, invoking its privacy rights, vows to do so only on its own timetable, if ever. Burk, in turn, hints of massive protests at this year's tournament, including columns of women marching in green burkas—symbolically equating the green-blazered men of Augusta with the Taliban.

The prospect of those excitements seemed quite distant on my visit, although, as it turned out, the day was a portentous one for the club. The big windows of the library, next to Ike's old desk (with its green leather inlay), offered a good view of the course, and even though the sun had broken through, the only souls I could see were the groundskeepers, fussing the course to a Disneyesque perfection. A fire was going in the fireplace on one side of the room, and, on another side, a television set was tuned to an all-news channel. There were no members present, but the countenance of one particular club member was flickering on the television screen—that of John Snow, who had just been nominated by President Bush to become the next Secretary of the Treasury. The news report was followed by a telecast of the daily White House press briefing, and, as always, Ari Fleischer, the press secretary, began the session by summarizing the day's big events: Snow's nomination, the signing of a strategic agreement with Tajikistan, and the President's meeting with the Prime Minister of Finland. Then Fleischer took his first question from the press.

"Is the new Treasury nominee still a member of Augusta?" the reporter asked. "And, if so, doesn't that present a problem?"

"Mr. Snow is in the process of stepping down from many of the boards and clubs that he belongs to," Fleischer replied. "In this case, he is resigning his membership there."

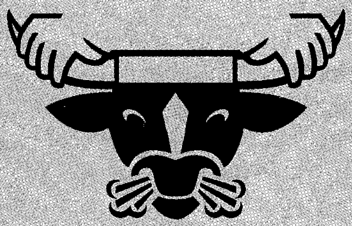
The next question was also about Augusta, as was the third. Finally, Fleischer ended that line of inquiry by declaring, unconvincingly, that Snow had decided on his own to quit Augusta, that the White House hadn't pressured him, and that the President did not consider membership in the club to be a disqualifying factor in prospective Presidential appointees.

The next day, I had lunch in New York with Martha Burk. She is an amiable woman of sixty-one, with a sweet smile and a pleasant Texas drawl that disguise a keen instinct for the political jugular. At lunch, she ordered crab cakes, sent back the potato salad ("I'm still on the Atkins," she explained), and then pronounced the meaning of John Snow's resignation from Augusta National.

"Augusta National has now become emblematic of sex discrimination," she said. "I've already won. Even if Augusta National never admits a woman, people will never again look at it without thinking, Discrimination. If I got off the stage today, the club is already tainted, the tournament is tarnished, and that will remain. Once you've reached the very highest levels of government, as it did yesterday, and it comes to the attention of the President of the United States, it's over, folks."

Burk describes herself as a "political psychologist," which is to say that she has advanced degrees in psychology but her career has been feminist politics. Although she was not widely known publicly before her Augusta campaign, she was well connected within the national feminist establishment, and is a practiced hand at the cultural battlefront. Hers is an old-line, fundamentalist feminism, rooted in the consciousness-raising ethos of the nineteen-sixties, which later provided the shock troops for such engagements as the 1986 abortion-rights march on Washington, and the Senate confirmation fights over the Supreme Court nominees Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas. She likens the Augusta campaign to the Thomas-Anita Hill hostilities in its importance to the feminist cause, and although the stakes seem hardly commensurate, the character and tone of the present undertaking are as passionately overheated. The aggrieved party in the Augusta struggle, she says, "is

ROBERT RISKO



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the entire female gender," and the issue of female membership at the club "is not about one woman in one golf tournament—it's about how guys can use you, go after your dollars, profess these public values, and then privately devalue you as a person, as an employee, as a stockholder."

The confirmation battles over Bork and Thomas introduced into politics a new strategy—that of attaching to the opponent such opprobrium that neutral parties, or even those favorably disposed to the subject, come to recognize a position of opposition as being the safest course. In the past six months, the Augusta National Golf Club has been subjected to a "Borking" of the first order, its reputation cascading so steeply and so swiftly that the tacticians in a conservative Republican Administration now deem membership in the club a taboo. This unexpected new litmus test (Ari Fleischer's objections notwithstanding) can only be attributed to Martha Burk's campaign; just a year earlier, William S. Farish, a member of Augusta, was nominated and confirmed as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's without a hint of concern over his golf-club membership.

Even Burk did not guess, when she sat down to write a letter of protest to Augusta National last June, that her effort would cause such a national commotion. As it turned out, she was lucky in choosing her cause—a men's club that is at once internationally famous and obsessively secretive—and even luckier in the man who embodies the club. In the Augusta National chairman William W. (Hootie) Johnson, Martha Burk found the perfect adversary.

When Johnson received Burk's letter, he brooded over its meaning, and over how the club should respond. He had never heard of Martha Burk, or of the National Council of Women's Organizations, which Burk chaired, but he believed that he knew political extortion when he saw it. Burk's assertion in her four-paragraph note that "Augusta National and the sponsors of the Masters do not want to be viewed as entities that tolerate discrimination" seemed to Johnson a sly threat to the tournament's sponsors; Burk's urging the club to accept women "now, so that this is not an issue when the tournament is staged next year" seemed nothing less than a deadline. Johnson solicited the views of a close circle of advisers, who confirmed his impression that Augusta National had been targeted for a political shakedown, and that a public campaign against the club, its members, and the Masters sponsors was coming unless the club immediately capitulated to the demands of Martha Burk, whoever she was. Capitulation, or even negotiation, wasn't a possibility.

Johnson wrote Burk a three-sentence reply, saying that he found her letter both "offensive and coercive," and concluding that "any further communication between us would not be productive." Then Johnson did something that he would very soon have cause to regret: he went public.

Johnson released to the press an eighteen-paragraph statement that was crafted in the tone of an exposé. He began by announcing that the club had "been contacted by Martha Burk," who wanted the club "to radically change our membership." He mentioned Burk's deadline, and said, "The message delivered to us was clearly coercive." Johnson proceeded to outline, in an almost weirdly prescient passage, how he imagined the campaign against Augusta would unfold. Augusta's members would be depicted "as insensitive bigots," the Masters-tournament sponsors would be threatened by "boycotts and other economic pressures," there would be anti-Augusta picketing, sloganeering, and Internet activity. "We could also anticipate," Johnson added, in what would prove to be a monumental understatement, "op-ed articles and editorials."

"We do not intend to become a trophy in their display case," Johnson concluded. "There may well come a day when women will be invited to join our membership but that timetable will be ours and not at the point of a bayonet."

Hootie Johnson had conjured an ominous vision of a harridan army, poised to swoop into battle at Martha Burk's command. The reality of Burk's operation is rather less imposing. The National Council of Women's Organizations has a minuscule individual membership. It is more like a public-policy trade association, an umbrella structure to which several dozen women's groups belong. Some of these member groups are established organizations of national reputation and influence (NOW is a member), and others basically consist of one woman with a laptop and a cause (International Black Women for Wages for Housework suggests itself). Burk's council receives relatively little funding, mostly from foundation grants. Burk is headquartered in a small room on the tenth floor of an aging Washington office building; she is not paid by the council, and her only full-time paid employee is a pleasant young woman with a nose ring named Rebecca, who sits at the front desk.

Burk points out that she did not go public with her protest of Augusta National; Hootie Johnson did. And she insists, credibly, that she did not initiate the scores of media interviews she has since granted ("I didn't have to"). Johnson's let-

## GRAVITY AND CENTER

I'm sorry I cannot say I love you when you say
you love me. The words, like moist fingers,
appear before me full of promise but then run away
to a little black room that is always dark,
where they are silent, elegant, like antique gold,
devouring the thing I feel. I want the force
of attraction to crush the force of repulsion
and for my inner and outer worlds to pierce
one another, like a horse whipped by a man.
I don't want words to sever me from reality.
I don't want to need them. I want nothing
to reveal feeling but feeling—as in freedom,
or the knowledge of peace in a realm beyond,
or the sound of water poured in a bowl.

—*Henri Cole*

ter arrived by overnight mail at Burk's office on July 9th, and within ten minutes her telephone rang. It was the Associated Press golf writer Doug Ferguson. Burk told him that she had tried "the olive-branch approach" with Hootie, but "he's unwilling to talk." Johnson's reply to her letter, she said, "is insensitive at best and confrontational at worst." The A.P. story described Johnson's public statement as "angry" and "defiant," a tone that hinted of the coverage to come.

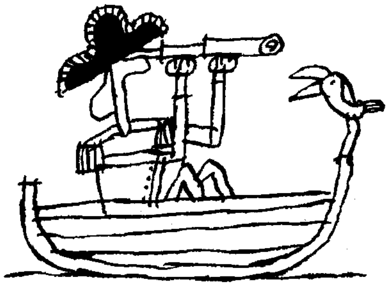
In her contest with Augusta National, Burk's only real leverage, besides her limitless availability to the press, was public opinion, and polls showed that most Americans either supported the club or were indifferent to its policies. But Burk was aiming at a much smaller target—the columnists, editorialists, reporters, and others who compose what Burk calls "the thinking class." She knew that Augusta National would yield only when a critical mass of members, sponsors, or affiliated organizations (such as the P.G.A.) were pushed beyond their level of shame tolerance; and the professional opinion shapers are the dispensers of shame. In that arena, Burk, a skilled polemicist, successfully framed a debate that Hootie Johnson could not possibly win. While Johnson spoke of the right to freely associate, and likened his millionaires' golf club to the Boy Scouts, Burk posed her dispute with Augusta National as a matter of basic civil rights.

Burk's battle with the golf club struck a particular chord at the New York *Times*, which, at the direction of the executive editor, Howell Raines, was unambiguous in its acceptance of Burk's premise that Augusta was guilty of bigotry. A page-one story conjectured that the club has no women members because they might spoil the fun of "bourbon, cigars, and ribaldry." The same story speculated that Augusta members settled for sexism, because "no prominent, powerful business leader can afford to be labeled a racist." As others picked up the cue, the portrait emerged of Augusta National as a sort of gathering place for neo-Confederate roués, stuck in arrested development—"A Boys' Club Full of Little Rascals," a Washington *Post* headline writer called it. The greatest portion of odium, though, was reserved for Johnson—the "pig-headed face of sexism," as a Miami *Herald* reporter referred to him. It did not help that Johnson, at seventy-one, is still known as Hootie, a name unfamiliar to the thinking class.

The Augusta National Golf Club was founded for, and by, wealthy, connected New Yorkers who wanted a place to play winter golf. When the club was created, in 1932, sixty of its sixty-three members lived in New York, including its co-founder and driving force, Clifford Roberts.

Roberts was a Wall Street man (a partner in the firm that became Dean Witter Reynolds) who had a clever investment touch, and a memorably disagreeable nature. He would become, as the golf writer Curt Sampson noted, Augusta National's "designated bastard," the progenitor of the unyielding rigidity that through the years has been the club's strength as well as its bane. It was Roberts who put together the deal that built Augusta National, and made it an invitation-only national club. It was Roberts who dreamed up the Masters tournament, and who gave it its grandiose name. But it was Bobby Jones who brought Augusta National its lasting and essential characteristic, as a golf shrine.

In the nineteen-twenties, Jones embodied golf's chivalric ideal. He was a Southern gentleman, at a time when the term carried no irony. Jones was handsome, gracious, literate—and, never forsaking his amateur status, he played golf like a dream. In a remarkable eight-year run, Jones won thirteen of the twenty-one major championships he entered, climaxing in his grandest achievement—winning what was then golf's Grand Slam. In 1930, Jones successfully defended his U.S. Open title, and also won the British Open and the U.S. and British Amateur championships. Then, at the age of twenty-eight, he announced that he was quitting competitive golf to take up the practice of law, and to undertake the building of the Augusta course, which would be a showplace for the game. It was so fitting a culmination that a *Times* editorialist was moved to verse: "With dignity he quits the memorable scene/on which he nothing common did, or mean."



In Augusta, Jones and Roberts found a property that perfectly suited their ambitions—a three-hundred-and-sixty-five-acre antebellum indigo plantation that had been turned into an ornamental nursery. Jones designed the course with Dr. Alister Mackenzie, the Bobby Jones of golf architects, who was completing Cypress Point at the time. There was relatively little rearranging of the earth in constructing the Augusta course; the par-5 No. 13 was essentially laid out by nature, with Mackenzie having only to build a green on the other side of a stream. Jones believed that his course should be challenging but playable; the fairways are wide, and, even now, there is little rough to punish errant tee shots. There are many courses more difficult than Augusta, and many that are more spectacularly contrived, but none are more elegant.

Augusta National opened for member play in December, 1932. At the club's first meeting, the decision was made that there would be no more meetings. Augusta National would be an autocracy. Bobby Jones would serve as president, but all effective power would reside in the club chairman, Clifford Roberts. The chairman's decisions were without appeal, and for the next forty-five years Augusta National and its increasingly important Masters tournament were answerable to no authority but Roberts.

That is what accounts for Augusta's singularity. Augusta National has a peculiar culture, with its own customs and traditions, even its own terminology. The two halves of the course are called the "first nine" and the "second nine," because Jones believed that "front side" and "back side" had awkward anatomical connotations. There are no "sand traps" at Augusta, only bunkers, and the stuff in them isn't sand but feldspar, a white, talc-like silicate powder that is trucked in from North Carolina. Those golf worshippers who reverentially line the fairways each year for the Masters (having managed to acquire a "badge," rather than a "ticket") are "patrons," not customers. Some aspects of the Augusta culture are less attractive than others. Although most of the members were Northern capitalists, the club cultivated an Old South atmosphere; the only blacks around the place were in service, carrying clubs or serving fare, and the Masters did not invite a black player until Lee Elder made the list, in 1975.

Augusta's rigidity is also the source of its enduring allure. The Masters is easily the least corrupted major event in sports. Roberts and Jones were something close to phobic about commercialization, as have been their successors, carefully limiting corporate sponsorship, banning commercial displays, controlling every aspect of every CBS telecast for forty-five years. While the N.F.L. has unabashedly become a made-for-television production, and baseball allows its World Series to become a promotional vehicle for network entertainment shows, Augusta maintains de-facto veto power over CBS's broadcasters and allows a relatively tiny commercial window of four minutes per hour. This year, because of the controversy over women, the Masters will be televised without commercials, with the club making up for the lost revenue itself—something that only Augusta could, or would, do.

Jones and Roberts exerted a presence at the club and its tournament until the nineteen-seventies. Jones died in 1971 of the spinal disease syringomyelia, which had afflicted him much of his life, and Roberts ran the club until 1976, when he finally named a successor and stepped down as chairman. The next year, a few weeks before the club opened for the season, Roberts rode out onto the course on his golf cart and killed himself with a .38 revolver. His eyeglasses, briefcase, and even his old Funk & Wagnall's dictionary are preserved in a display case in the clubhouse.

The only member of Augusta National whom I knew even slightly was Thomas H. Wyman, a former chairman of CBS. Wyman's life had seemed the very profile of an Augusta club member: an education at Andover, Amherst, and Lausanne, followed by top positions at Pillsbury, Polaroid, CBS, and S. G. Warburg. Tom Wyman loved golf, and he considered the Masters and its host club national treasures. He told me that he remembered the exact moment in the late seventies when he received the telephone call from Jackson Stephens, one of Roberts' successors as chairman, telling him he would be invited to join the club. Wyman was so excited that he thought it was a prank call, and almost said so; he wanted to ask how much it would cost, then he stopped himself, mindful that the club can be brutally punitive in cases of bad form. One prospective member asked if he could pay his fee in two installments, and he never heard from the club again.

Wyman went down to Augusta whenever he could, and, when his three boys were grown and in business themselves, he brought them, too. Wyman deeply admired the club's management style—autocracy worked. "If you have the right person in such a job, it really works beautifully, in terms of admissions, in terms of how the club is run," he told me. "If you think about it, if you could eliminate half the committees that you know in your life, the world would be a better place. It would work better."

But last year Wyman's life, and his view of Augusta National, dramatically changed. Wyman's wife, Elizabeth, died in January. In November, Wyman married Deborah Whiting Little, whom he had known as a colleague from his days at Polaroid. Little had long since left the corporate world, and had become an Episcopal priest in Boston, ministering to the city's homeless. Little, who is in her fifties, told me that her own values are grounded in the social activism of the nineteen-sixties, and that she couldn't fully comprehend her husband's deep attachment to Augusta National. When Martha Burk's campaign made Augusta's membership policies a matter of public dispute, Tom's membership in the club became the subject of much conversation in the Wyman household.

By last autumn, Wyman had begun to reassess his membership at Augusta National. Among other things, he had taken teaching positions at Harvard and at M.I.T., two places, he said, where "I didn't advertise my membership" at Augusta. Finally, in November, Wyman wrote a letter to Hootie Johnson, urging a compromise with Burk. Wyman suggested that the club resolve to invite its first woman member sometime after the 2003 Masters, but before the tournament of 2004. Wyman intimated that he would resign from the club if Johnson didn't relent. Johnson wrote back, "I want you to . . . know that there is no timetable for the admission of women into our membership, nor do I expect there to be one in the foreseeable future."

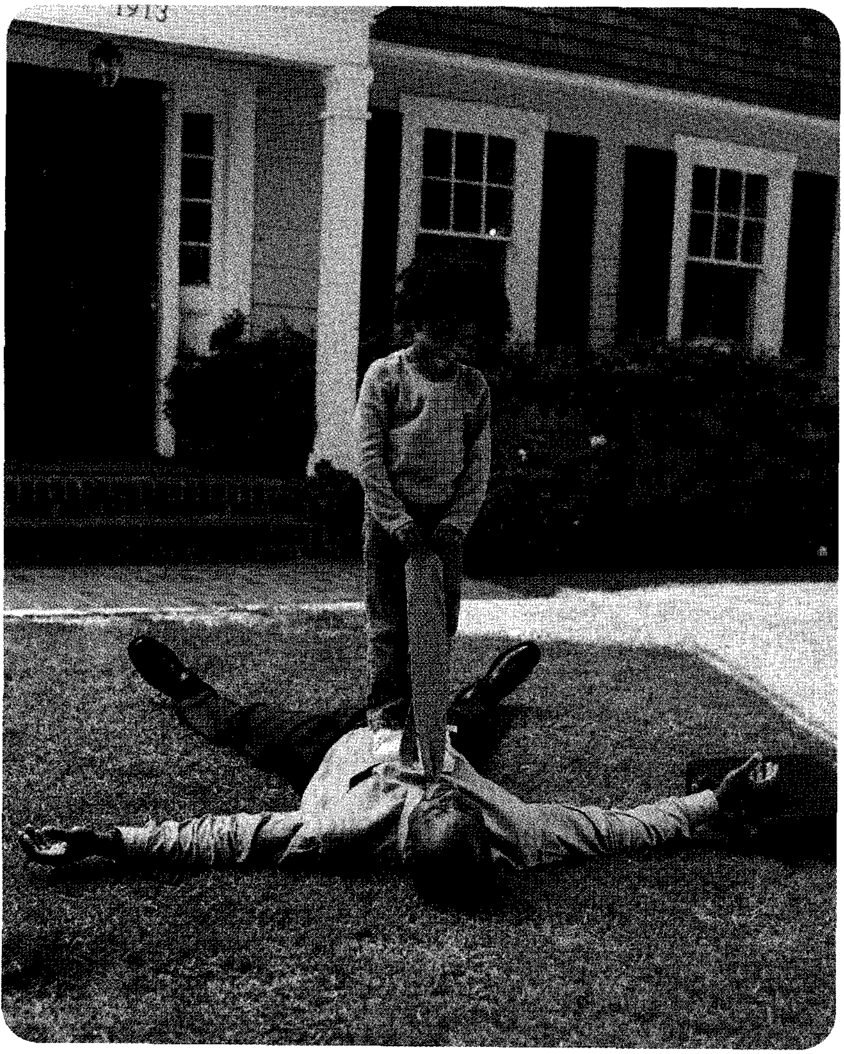
When the Wyman family gathered the week before Thanksgiving, Wyman's three sons urged their father to quit the club in protest, and said that they would not return to Augusta with him in any event ("our small way of exhibiting civil disobedience," Tom, Jr., says). Wyman resigned from the club, and went public by speaking to the *Times* for an article that the paper ran on the front page. In the story, Wyman was unsparing, calling Johnson "pigheaded," and blaming the controversy on "some redneck, old-boy types down there."

Johnson responded in his annual Christmas letter to club members, noting the resignations of Wyman and Snow, and restating his resolve. "I am confident . . . that the overwhelming majority of our members wants us to stay the course and continue to do whatever's necessary to protect our great club," he wrote, "and that is what we intend to do."

Wyman recollected that the club's acceptance of its first black members had gone smoothly, and he predicted that the same would be the case when women were admitted, which he considered an inevitability. The club has long allowed women to play the course as guests (they played more than a thousand rounds at Augusta last year), and Wyman said that a few women members would hardly be noticed. "If Hootie could swallow his pride, it could be over in three days."

I spoke with Hootie Johnson shortly after Wyman resigned, and Wyman's public words still hung in the air. "Redneck and pigheaded," Johnson repeated. "By a former member."

Johnson was plainly troubled by the media flogging he has received, and he seemed a bit perplexed by it, too. It was the surprise of a man who has accustomed himself to an agreeable idea about his standing in the world, only to discover late in life (and on the front page of the New York *Times*) that his accounts aren't settled at all. The Augusta controversy has somehow trumped everything that came before it in Johnson's life, the life he lived in South Carolina at a time when



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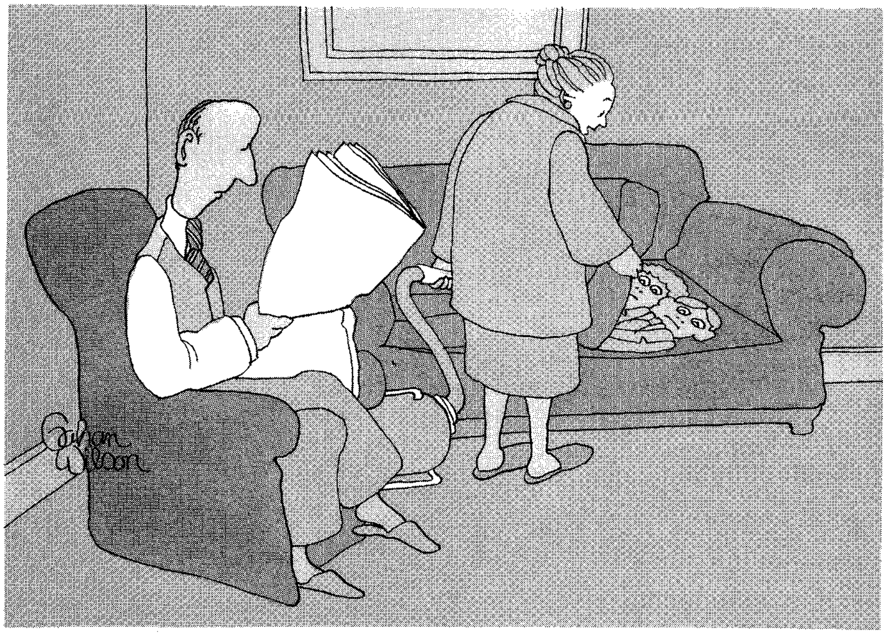

*"I've just found out what happened to the Hendersons."*

* * *

terms like "redneck" and "discrimination" had genuine application.

"It is foreign to us, and it's hard for us, to hear people referring to him in that manner," says Robert McNair, a former South Carolina governor, who has known Hootie Johnson most of his life.

Johnson came of age at a time when his state, like much of the American South, had not yet emerged from its long benightedness. In 1948, when Hootie Johnson was a star running back at Greenwood High School, the big news in town was coming from the governor's mansion, where Strom Thurmond was making his segregationist Presidential run on the breakaway Democratic States' Rights Party ticket. The year before, the state had attracted national attention when thirty-one white men were tried and acquitted in the lynching of a black man named Willie Earle; what was considered remarkable at the time was that the white men had been arrested and tried at all. Politically, South Carolina was a one-party state, and Democrats did not allow blacks to participate in the Party's primary elections until ordered to do so by a judge.

By the nineteen-sixties, South Carolina had taken a turn. The state's voters elected a string of relatively progressive governors, McNair among them, who were charged with integrating the public schools and implementing the new federal civil-rights laws. "We had all come back from World War Two and we had seen other people from other places, and had been a part of what was going on elsewhere," McNair recalls. "We were determined to move South Carolina forward, to try to make it better, try to overcome those hurdles without the kinds of confrontations and political activities that we'd seen in Alabama, and Mississippi, and Arkansas."

But in 1965, when McNair was governor, Democrats in South Carolina faced a crisis of alienation from the increasingly liberal national party. The year before, Thurmond, by then a United States senator, had anticipated the future and switched parties, becoming a Republican. Barry Goldwater swept South Carolina that year, and, almost instantly, the state's Democrats had an opposition party for the first time since Reconstruction. Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy" was soon on the horizon, and Democrats had to reinvent themselves to survive. "The Party was just a very loose thing," McNair says. "It wasn't organized, it wasn't funded." The Party needed to contrive a way to consolidate the newly enfranchised black vote while somehow holding on to its white base, even as the state's schools and lunch counters were being integrated.

McNair knew that none of this could be achieved without the help of the state's unelected power élite, the business and finance class, of which Hootie Johnson was by then a prominent member. Johnson's father had been a small-town banker, a Roosevelt man who believed that the New Deal had saved the South. The elder Johnson insisted that his boys involve themselves politically, and when Hootie was twenty-six he served a term in the state legislature. After his father died, Hootie took over the bank at the age of thirty-four, and was on his way to building it into the largest bank in the region, when McNair asked for his help. "Hootie became one of the very active, very progressive leaders of the state," McNair says.

In 1968, after three students were killed by police at the all-black South Carolina State College, Johnson won financing from the state legislature for an undergraduate business program—making it the only school in the state where blacks could earn a business degree. Two years later, Johnson became finance chairman for the Party's successful statewide slate, which sent three blacks to the state legislature—the first since 1902. "He became a symbol of racial healing," says I. S. Leevy Johnson, one of those three black legislators, who is now a prominent Columbia lawyer. "And I don't think it was done in pro-forma fashion. I think he genuinely felt that it was in the best interest of the state that the races work together."

In 1967, Johnson helped to found the state's first chapter of the Urban League, and was eventually invited by Vernon Jordan to join the league's national board. Johnson's bank became the first in the state to appoint a black, M. Maceo Nance, Jr., who was the president of S.C. State, to its board of directors.

"I think people are confusing some things about Hootie Johnson, who he really is," Benjamin Payton, the president of Tuskegee University, says. In 1967, Payton, a South Carolina native, came home from Harvard and Yale to try to improve the fortunes of struggling Benedict College, a school founded by Baptists for freed slaves a century earlier. He called on Johnson. "I asked him for help in examining some of our financial practices and policies," Payton says. "He brought his team in, didn't charge us a nickel. And

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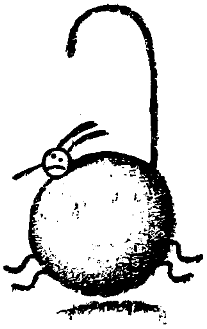
I mean, gave me some hard and painful reviews of what needed to be done. Didn't sugarcoat it, didn't patronize me."

In 1962, during the tenure of Governor Ernest (Fritz) Hollings, the state had registered its hesitation about the dawning civil-rights movement by raising the Confederate battle flag over the statehouse, in Columbia. That decision became an issue in the 2000 Presidential campaign, bringing threats of boycotts. Johnson pushed hard for the removal of the flag, and was credited with helping to shape the compromise that did so. "The fact is, slavery was wrong, which was why we had the war," Johnson says, explaining his position on the flag. "Pure and simple. It was wrong."

I asked Johnson how he reconciled this record with his insistence on the issue of women's membership at Augusta. "I don't believe it's a moral issue at all," he said. "I think that's the way that human beings are. Women and men, they have this, I don't know, inclination or need—I wish I was more articulate on it—this need to be together, and just, for men, sometimes, to just be men."

"It is a contradiction in the man, I'll have to say that," says Martha Burk, speaking of Johnson's progressive deeds back home. "There's a contradiction there that I don't understand, on a personal or professional level."

However, Burk (who doesn't golf) is willing to speculate as to why Johnson and, for that matter, the member of any all-male club, might wish to exclude women. "I am a psychologist," she says. "I once heard someone say that men don't actually like women. Men like men, and they tolerate women. I think there's the sort of cult of manhood at work. Certainly at Augusta, there's more. There's the cult of money; that is not a controlling factor, but a large contributing factor. There's the cult of exclusiveness. . . . It makes some people in the world feel better if they can always be one up on somebody else."



Over the winter, I had several lengthy conversations with Burk about Augusta, and I confessed to her early on that I didn't quite see how the denial of membership in a private golf club, however narrow-minded the practice might be, amounted to rank bigotry (or "gender apartheid," as Jesse Jackson phrased it). At one point, I asked her to help me to understand the benefit to society that would result from a woman joining Augusta National. She responded with what has been, throughout her campaign, her case-closing line: "You wouldn't ask me what was the benefit to society if we were talking about excluding people on race."

No, but this wasn't race. I wondered, "Can there exist such a thing as a benign exclusion of one gender or the other in a private social setting?"

Her answer surprised me. "I myself have what I call the 'girls' dinner,' " she said. "Just some of the women in the women's movement, and we get together for dinner. Women in Congress do it, too."

The difference, she explained, has to do with the conditioned behavior of men and women. "Here's the difference. And it's interesting that you should ask this, and it's just now come to me, pretty clearly. It is because, when men get together, denigrating women is often a part of the social interaction. When women get together, denigrating men is rarely done. It's just not even on the radar screen. Even among the so-called strident feminists of the women's movement. We don't have anything to hide in that way, and men seem to."

Burk grew up in Pasadena, outside Houston, with two younger brothers, who tagged her with the childhood nickname that now seems almost too unlikely—"They called me Hootie," she says. When she was a student at the University of Houston, she married Ed Talley, a pharmacist, and had a child. The young couple settled near Dallas, where Ed and a partner established a small chain of drug stores. Martha had a second child in 1965, but the life of housewifery rankled. "The most radicalizing experience in my life was being a stay-at-home mother," she says. "It's an unhealthy model, for the kids and the mother. It forced isolation for women in that situation. . . . I knew there was something wrong with this picture."

She returned to school, earning a master's degree at the University of Texas at Arlington. There she met Ralph Estes, a professor of accounting who needed an assistant for a commercial venture he was undertaking, a computerized system of handicapping Texas high-school football games. Nothing much came of the venture, but Burk developed computer skills, and created an educational-software program that eventually brought her financial independence. It was also the time of Burk's political awakening. Estes was something of a figure in local social-activism circles (he later headed the Texas A.C.L.U.), and Burk was drawn into the antiwar protest movement. "It was in the sixties, early seventies," she recalls. "We were part of the same social-action, antiwar network."

In 1985, her boys grown, Martha and Ed divorced, and Burk looked to get out of Texas. Ralph Estes had taken an endowed chair at Wichita State University, and involved himself in local politics. Burk travelled to Wichita on business, and decided to stay. She and Estes were married in 1986. Wichita turned out to be the ideal place for Burk's developing feminist activism. It was the home of Dr. George Tiller, who operated one of the few late-term abortion clinics in the nation. The clinic attracted fierce pro-life opposition and pro-choice defense, and Burk joined in the battle to defend Tiller. "I didn't like what he did to women, the way he treated women," she says. "But, at the same time, I believed in what he was doing in the larger sense. I thought that abortion should be legal, it should be accessible. And he allowed that to be true."

Burk became president of the Wichita chapter of NOW, and in 1990 she and Estes moved to Washington, in order to engage in full-time political advocacy. They established the Center for the Advancement of Public Policy, running it out of a DuPont Circle town house. Burk began a feminist newsletter, and in 2000 was elected chair of the National Council of Women's Organizations, advocating for women's rights in Afghanistan, against the privatization of Social Security, and, since last summer, for the inclusion of women on the membership rolls of the Augusta National Golf Club.

Meanwhile, a new golf season has commenced, and the campaign against Augusta National has waned, and waxed. The *Times*' enthusiasm for the story brought some embarrassment to the paper, when editors spiked two columns that deviated slightly from the perceived party line; Raines eventually ordered the columns published, but the paper has since been covering the story with noticeably less zeal, or, at least, less frequency. Augusta National hired a crisis-management specialist, Jim McCarthy, who is based in Washington, and whose aggressive policing of news coverage seems to have tempered its tone. On the other hand, as Burk suggests, the campaign has clearly succeeded in its strategy of tainting the club. The charge of sexism is now being used as a weapon against some members by their business competitors, whom Burk refers to as "whistle-blowers." When John Snow was being mentioned for the Treasury Department, a former colleague of his telephoned Burk's office to make sure that she knew of his Augusta membership. A rival of the Bassett Furniture magnate Robert H Spilman, Jr., made a similar call, as did several people from the academy, who informed Burk of the membership at Augusta of three members of a Harvard University board. The whistle-blowers had one thing in common. "In all three cases," Burk says, "these were men."

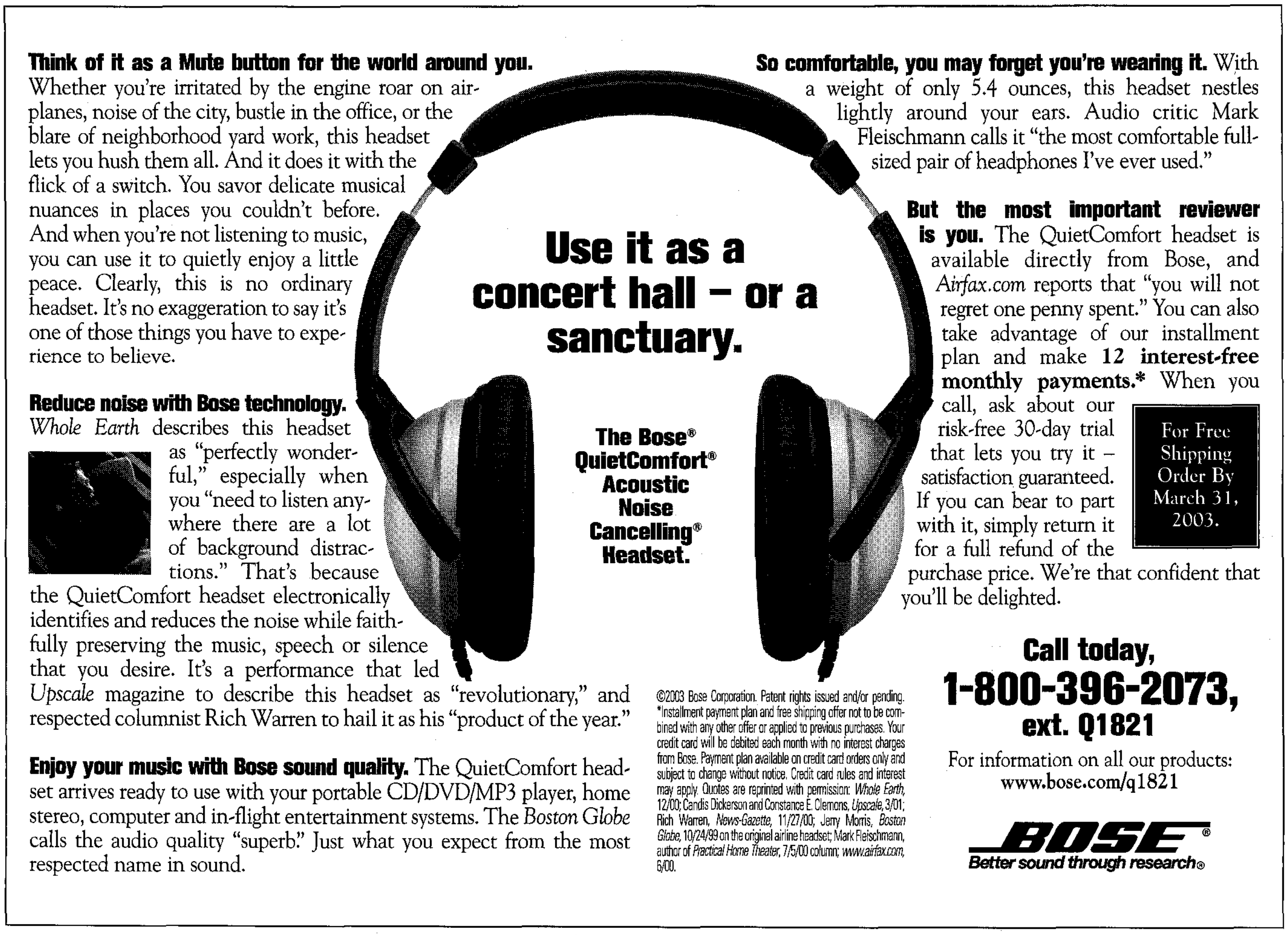
One evening in early January, I received a call from the Reverend Dr. Deborah Little, telling me that Tom Wyman was seriously ill in a Boston hospital. He'd had surgery, and was stricken by a sudden, devastating infection. A few nights later, with Deborah at his side, he died.

In our most recent conversation, Wyman had told me that, since his public resignation from Augusta, he had received hundreds of letters, telephone calls, and electronic-mail messages from people extending him their gratitude and support for his gesture. "It wasn't a role I would have forecast," he said. "I have to confess to you, I'm really surprised and proud to have touched people."

I told Wyman that I was curious about one aspect of his decision to resign from the club, and the pointed manner in which he'd done it. He'd been a member of Augusta for twenty-five years, including a long stretch when the club had neither women nor blacks as members. Wasn't it inconsistent, even a bit hypocritical, for him to now claim the moral high ground on the issue?

"They were pretty comfortable," he told me, "and I was, too. Certainly, there was no worry about losing the tournament. There wasn't any issue anywhere near the table, as far as one could see, that was raised by anybody. And Martha Burk, well, she brought out the microscope and turned it on the issue, and, with a conviction and a resolve, has changed the formula."

Wyman said that he continued to believe in the right to freely associate, but that when two principles collide something has to yield. "You know, all things being equal, the idea that a club could pick its members—that principle sounds O.K., as long as there isn't something bigger," he said. "Now there's something bigger. That is, times have changed. We didn't get it, for a long time. And now it's there." ♦



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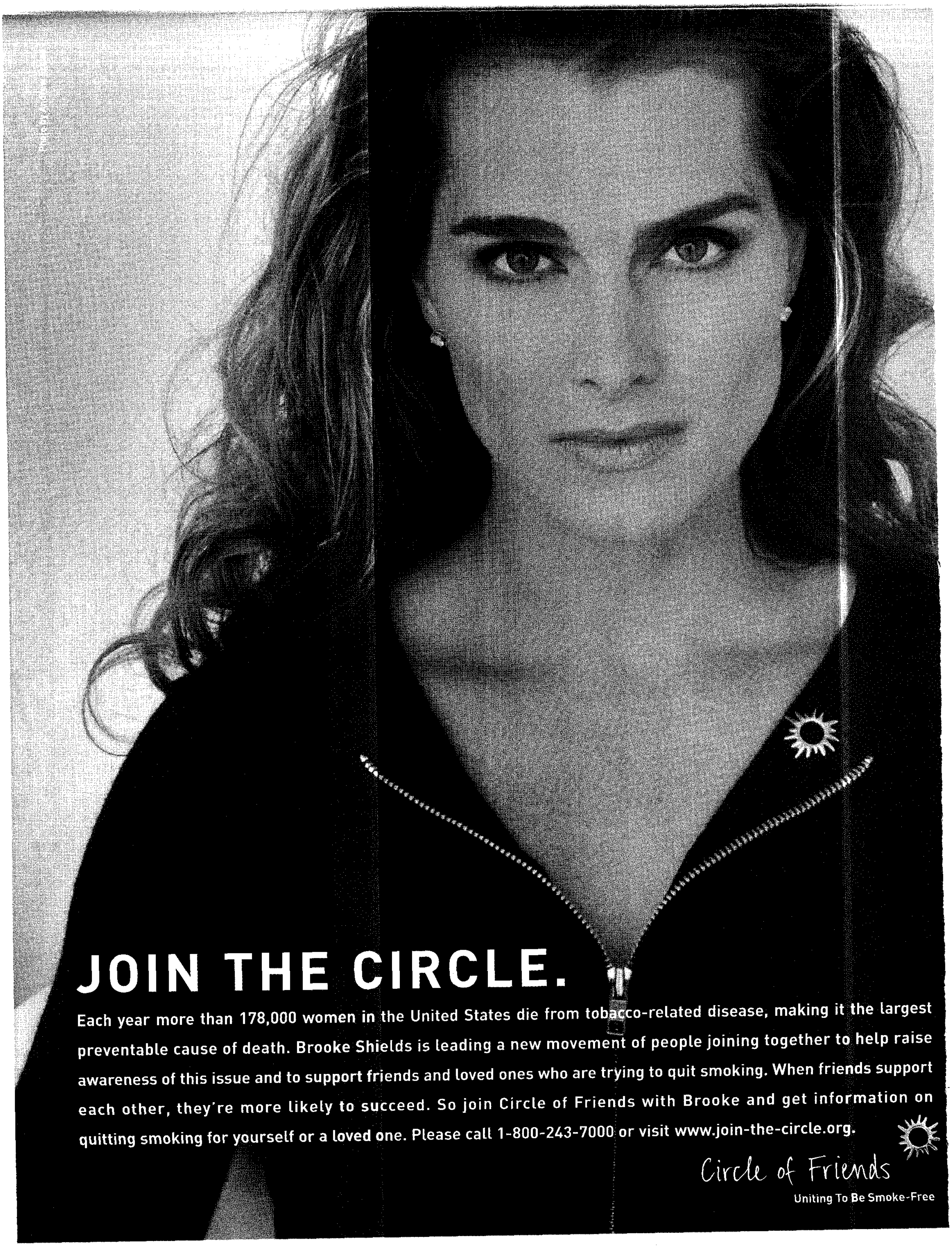

# JOIN THE CIRCLE.

Each year more than 178,000 women in the United States die from tobacco-related disease, making it the largest preventable cause of death. Brooke Shields is leading a new movement of people joining together to help raise awareness of this issue and to support friends and loved ones who are trying to quit smoking. When friends support each other, they're more likely to succeed. So join Circle of Friends with Brooke and get information on quitting smoking for yourself or a loved one. Please call 1-800-243-7000 or visit www.join-the-circle.org.

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### SHOUTS & MURMURS

# NICE DOGGY

### BY SUSAN ORLEAN

About 15,000 years of friendship between man and dog have helped man's best friend to develop unique ways of understanding humans: abilities that still are somewhat mysterious to scientists and dog lovers, several studies released this week found.

"It looks like dogs really . . . are thinking about what we want, and they understand that we are trying to communicate," said Brian Hare of Harvard University, who authored one of the studies. Not only did the dogs Hare tested pick up on what human researchers were trying to convey, they surprised scientists by doing it much better than other species, even chimpanzees.—*CNN.*

The other day, my Welsh springer spaniel, Cooper, gave me a manicure. He doesn't give the world's best manicure—for that you'd have to go to that Korean joint, Nuclear Nails, or whatever it's called, on Broadway—but he really tries. He can tell whether I'm in the mood to have my cuticles cut or just pushed back, and it was actually his idea to wear a little white uniform—he can just sense that it makes me more comfortable to have a "professional" atmosphere whenever I'm getting personal services. And you know how every time you get a manicure you immediately remember something you need in your handbag? And how if you put your hand in your bag to get it you wreck your nails? Cooper knows how frustrating that is to me, so as soon as he's done with my top coat he goes over to my handbag, empties the contents, and separates everything into little piles so that I can get whatever I need without making a dent in my polish.

Look, I know he's not perfect. He ate an entire pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving while I was at a performance of "Phantom." He engages in retributive vomiting when he's left alone for more than four hours. He can, at times, smell. But in terms of totally grokking my emotions, he is off the charts. Whenever I break up with someone, Cooper is there with the complete hey-girlfriend treatment: the bottle of California champagne, the fatty snacks, the comfy sweatclothes that I hadn't dared wear while courting Mr. Wrong. He doesn't dole out all the tired lines like "You're too good for him anyway" and "You are by far the best-looking and thinnest of all of our friends"; he just gives me that look, nudges the bowl of Doritos in my direction, and by his silence implies that I don't need to do anything but have myself a big old cry.

Monkeys? Sure, they're super-cute, especially when you dress them in those frilly white bonnets and little corduroy shorts. It's nice that they can acquire a complex vocabulary of gestural signs and classify sets of objects with respect to their ordinal relationship. The opposable thumb is a big whoop. But that's the thing: they have the morphology but not the motivation. Do you remember Mr. Thumb ever zipping your dress without being begged?

Recently, I got downsized at work, and then I had to listen to my so-called friends give me their "rational" assessments of the situation—the crap about my failure to meet quarterly departmental goals, my responsibility for the mold-spore contamination in the office refrigerator, the unfortunate incident with the color copier. I guess they thought that once I saw my role in getting canned I could be more philosophical. Note to "friends": Yeah, like, I'm sure. Cooper, on the other hand, just empathized, and then, when I went in to clean out my desk, he marched himself straight into the boss's office and did what I would have done if I weren't a lady. Of course, I'm sorry about the Klez virus on the firm's server, but you have to admit it's pretty impressive for a dog to know how to write code. Anyway, it was a catharsis for both of us, even if the judge didn't see it that way.

Cooper's empathy skills are so acute that I've decided to let him screen not only potential suitors but friends and family members, too—my very own Office of Homeland Security. He's really strict. In fact, it's just the two of us now. I'm pretty happy, mostly, but I can tell that Cooper senses that I'm a little lonely. I think if I really want to he'll let me get another dog. ♦

QVC is proud to join Circle of Friends, an initiative designed to raise awareness about the toll tobacco-related disease takes on women, and the importance of offering support to loved ones trying to quit smoking.

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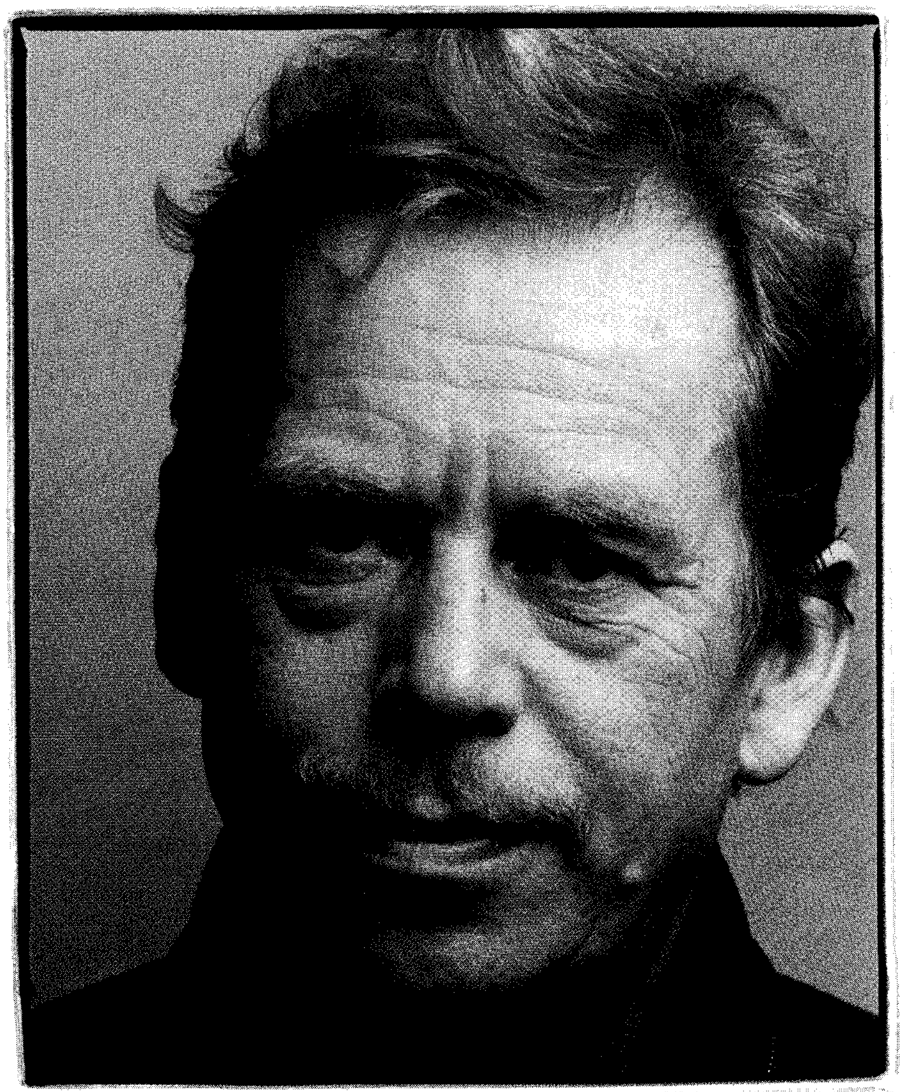
LETTER FROM PRAGUE

# EXIT HAVEL

*The King leaves the Castle.*

BY DAVID REMNICK



*Havel's Presidential speeches often provided an inventory of what haunted him.*

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ/CONTACT

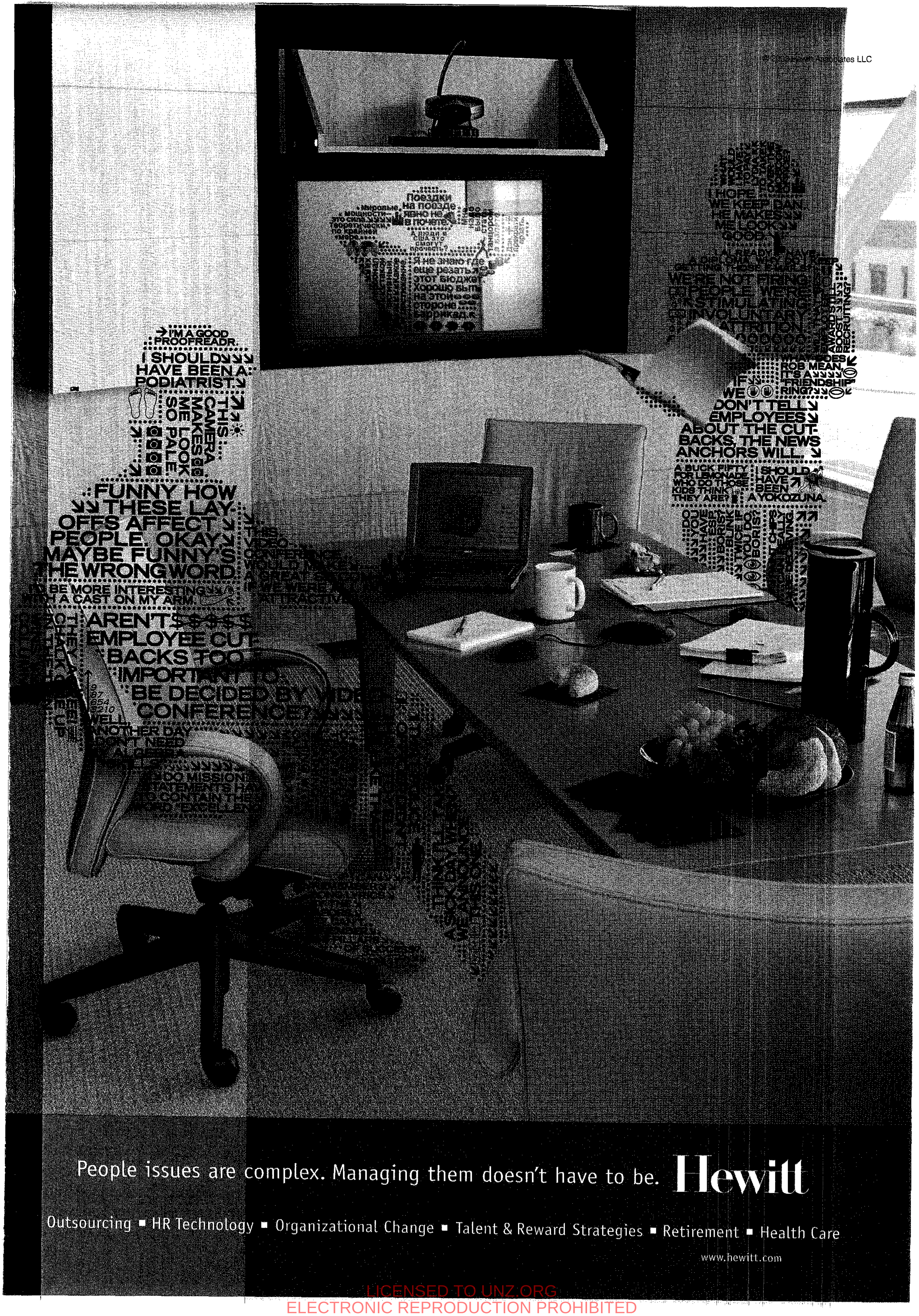
On his last weekday in Prague Castle as the President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel taped a brief farewell address to the nation and then took a telephone call from George Bush. Havel, who came to office thirteen years ago wearing borrowed trousers that flapped high around his ankles, now wore an exquisitely tailored navy-blue three-piece suit, a white shirt, and a tie that had undoubtedly done its duty at summit meetings and memorial services. A clutch of efficient aides scurried around his office door. A steward with a napkin folded over his arm delivered a glass of white wine. Sunlight streamed through tall windows, and chandeliers lent a glow to the flowers and the Oriental carpets.

The American President might have been surprised to learn that Havel's castle makes the White House seem inelegant, but Bush probably remembered the place well. Just a few months earlier, he had been to the Castle for a NATO summit—the first ever in a former Warsaw Pact capital. Bush, his Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and dozens of generals and other politicians were treated not merely to the usual working meetings but also to theatrical performances organized by Havel himself. The NATO visitors watched an ersatz eighteenth-century dance (complete with powdered wigs and simulated copulation) that might have been considered obscene had it not been so amusing. They listened to booming renditions of the "Ode to Joy," a souped-up "Marseillaise," and John Lennon's "Power to the People."

"I didn't understand anything," Rumsfeld remarked as he headed toward dinner. "I'm from Chicago."

When I got a chance recently to ask Havel about his NATO productions, he smiled and said, "I didn't want it to look like just another meeting of politicians and generals, so I shaped those arrangements, to a great extent. The ballet was set in Central Europe and featured Mozart's music, and it also included elements of the American grotesque, to underline the Euro-Atlantic character of the gathering. It may have been on the verge of what Mr. Rumsfeld and certain others could tolerate."

Awkward and shy, Havel is a curiously natural director. Forty-odd years ago, he started out as a stagehand and a playwright. He was an acolyte of Beckett and Ionesco—the theatre of the absurd. The sense of the absurd extends to his own life. There is surely no modern biography that is more improbable yet dramatically coherent. Havel's is the rare life, Milan Kundera has written, that resembles a work of art and gives "the impression of a perfect compositional unity." Consider: A bourgeois boy becomes a bohemian playwright; he then becomes a dissident, who, for the crime of writing subversive essays and helping to organize a subversive movement called Charter 77, is encouraged by the regime to master the art of welding in a reeking Czech prison; finally, in late November, 1989, everything implodes and he is leading demonstrations in Wenceslas Square, and hundreds of thousands of people are shouting "*Havel na hrad!*" ("Havel to the Castle!"); within days, he is the head of state, working in the same hilltop redoubt that served as a seat of power for dynasts of the Bohemian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I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A PODIATRIST.
THIS CAMERA MAKES ME LOOK SO PALE
FUNNY HOW THESE LAY OFFS AFFECT PEOPLE. OKAY, MAYBE FUNNY'S THE WRONG WORD
I'D BE MORE INTERESTING WITH A CAST ON MY ARM.
AREN'T $$$$$ EMPLOYEE CUT BACKS TOO IMPORTANT TO BE DECIDED BY VIDEO CONFERENCE?
WELL, ANOTHER DAY
DON'T NEED
DO MISSION STATEMENTS HAVE TO CONTAIN THE WORD "EXCELLENCE"
THIS VIDEO CONFERENCE WOULD MAKE A GREAT
IF WE WERE ATTRACTIVE
Поездки на поезде явно не в почете.
Я не знаю где еще резать этот бюджет
Хорошо быть на этой стороне баррикад
I HOPE WE KEEP DAN. HE MAKES ME LOOK GOOD.
WE'RE NOT FIRING PEOPLE. WE'RE STIMULATING INVOLUNTARY ATTRITION.
WHAT DOES ROB MEAN, IT'S A "FRIENDSHIP" RING?
IF WE DON'T TELL EMPLOYEES ABOUT THE CUT-BACKS, THE NEWS ANCHORS WILL.
A BUCK FIFTY FOR LEMONADE. WHO DO THOSE KIDS THINK THEY ARE?
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*"What are you pretending to be absorbed in?"*

kingdom and the Hapsburg monarchy, for the emissaries of Berlin and the satraps of the Kremlin.

During the uprising, which quickly became known as the Velvet Revolution, and for a while afterward, there were graffiti around town proclaiming, *"Havel je král"*—"Havel Is King." The King tried to demystify his Castle. He ordered the costume designer for the movie "Amadeus" to create red-white-and-blue uniforms for the palace guards. (Communist-era guards wore khaki.) He himself at first refused the suits that his friend Prince Karel Schwarzenberg brought him. "I can't wear any of these!" Havel said. "I'd look like a gigolo." In jeans and sweater, he rode a scooter through the Castle halls. He threw a "festival of democracy" in the courtyards, with jugglers and mimes performing while he wandered around drinking Pilsner and greeting everyone. Later on, when he discovered that the chandeliers in the gilded Spanish Hall were outmoded, a couple of typical visitors, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, paid for new fixtures. For weeks, he drove his staff crazy as he monkeyed around with the remote control, dimming the lights, then brightening them again.

"When I first came here, there were many things that I found absurd," Havel told me in his office. A sly, can-you-believe-it smile creased his face. "For example, it seemed to us on the first day that there were three rooms, close to where we're sitting now, which you couldn't enter. When we finally got inside, we discovered a kind of communications facility for contacts within the Warsaw Pact. So we took advantage of that and sent a New Year's greeting to Mikhail Gorbachev. Later, I heard from confidential sources that the K.G.B. chief, Vladimir Kryuchkov, didn't really appreciate the fact that we'd found those facilities."

Within a few months of Havel's ascension, the euphoria of the Velvet Revolution began to fade. The poetry of those winter weeks, the theatrical press conferences and the street rallies, yielded to the prose of governing a ruined state. No more scooters, no more sneaking out of the Castle for a drink at a local pub. Havel allowed that he felt "strangely paralyzed, empty inside," fearful that dissent and governing were hardly the same. "At the very deepest core of this feeling there was, ultimately, a sensation of the absurd: what Sisyphus might have felt if one fine day his boulder stopped, rested on the hilltop, and failed to roll back down," he told an audience in Salzburg. "It was the sensation of a Sisyphus mentally unprepared for the possibility that his efforts might succeed, a Sisyphus whose life had lost its old purpose and hadn't yet developed a new one."

Havel had been preceded by dictators and, therefore, had to learn to be a President nearly on his own. He borrowed from many examples, especially from the humanism of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the President of the First Czech Republic after the First World War, and from his friend Richard von Weizsäcker, the President of Germany. (The powers of the Czech Presidency are based largely on the postwar West German model; the President is secondary to the Prime Minister in domestic affairs but has great authority in making appointments and in foreign policy.) At times, Havel felt thoroughly insufficient, a fraud. A familiar Prague voice, the voice of Kafka, told him what anyone who has grown up in a police state knows instinctually—that it could all end as easily as it started.

"I am the kind of person who would not be in the least surprised if, in the very middle of my Presidency, I were to be summoned and led off to stand trial before some shadowy tribunal, or taken straight to a quarry to break rocks," he told a startled audience at Hebrew University, in Jerusalem, less than six months after taking office. "Nor would I be surprised if I were to suddenly hear the reveille and wake up in my prison cell, and then, with great bemusement, proceed to tell my fellow-prisoners everything that had happened to me in the past six months. The lower I am, the more proper my place seems; and the higher I am the stronger my suspicion is that there has been some mistake."

In Havel's thirteen years as President—first of Czechoslovakia and then, after the Slovaks and the Czechs divided into two states, in 1993, of the Czech Republic—many of his advisers repeatedly begged him to delete, or at least soften, these public moments of self-doubt. What effect would they have on an exhausted people waiting for the radical transformation of their country? (Imagine Chirac or Blair, Bush or Schröder beginning a national address with an ode to his midnight dread!) Havel, however,

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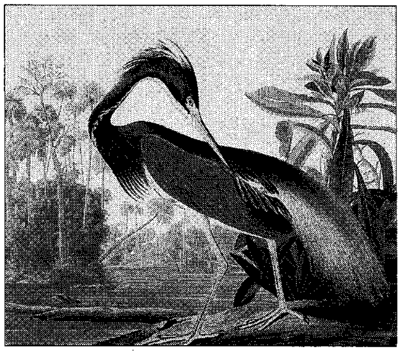

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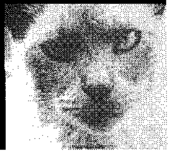

would not be edited. The Presidential speech was the only literary genre left to him now, his most direct means of expressing not only his personal feelings but also the spirit of the distinctively human politics he wanted to encourage after so many decades of inhuman ideology. "Some aides tried to stop him, but these speeches had a therapeutic value for him," Havel's closest aide, Vladimír Hanzel, told me. And yet, at times, Havel seemed not a President so much as Kafka reading from his diaries, providing an inventory of what haunted him:

> Then there is a powerful feeling of general alienation . . . an experience of unbearable oppressiveness, a need constantly to explain myself to someone, to defend myself, a longing for an unattainable order of things, a longing that increases as the terrain I walk through becomes more muddled and confusing. . . . Everything I encounter displays to me its absurd aspect first. I feel as though I am constantly lagging behind powerful, self-confident men whom I can never overtake, let alone emulate. I find myself essentially hateful, deserving only mockery.

Political gossip, to say nothing of political journalism, abhors stasis, and Havel's last days in office were on the calendar of Prague's columnists and parliamentarians for so long that it became an article of faith that he was "just like Mikhail Gorbachev"—a figure of historical magnitude who had overstayed his welcome, popular abroad but not at home. Of Gorbachev that was certainly true. On Christmas night, 1991, when he resigned his office and handed over the nuclear codes to his hostile inheritor, Boris Yeltsin, his poll ratings were in the single digits. Havel's case is quite different. His popularity rating when he took office was more than eighty per cent; he leaves with around fifty-five per cent. Even for heroes, such endurance is rare. In 2000, Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, ran again for the Polish Presidency. He received one per cent of the vote.

Havel surely has detractors: the "lost generation" of pensioners and workers who could not cope with the dizzying cultural changes and the rising cost of living; leftists who still resent the collapse of Communist ideology; right-wingers who find his economic thinking fuzzy and his speeches naïve and too philosophical. Some intellectuals, like the social theorist Ernest Gellner, thought that Havel's rhetoric of love triumphing over evil had been admirable, perhaps, but "absurd, indefensible" as an explanation for the fall of Communism; that softness, Gellner wrote, had allowed members of the old regime to escape unpunished and reap enormous profits in the new economy. There were also subtler, more personal forms of resentment. One morning, I had coffee with a theatre director in his late seventies, who had known Havel since he was a young man. It was clear that the director disliked Havel, not for reasons of official policy but, rather, because of Havel's "moralisms," his insistence, after the Soviet invasion in August, 1968, that Czechs try to resist the regime by "living in truth." Even now, Havel's purity stung the director; it was a lingering and deeply personal rebuke. The old man had not signed Charter 77; to do so was an almost suicidal crossing. Only hundreds of people dared go that far, he said, while "the rest just wanted to live."

Although the Czechs have suffered none of the violence that has plagued other countries in the region, especially Yugoslavia and Romania, the transition has not been purely pacific. Far from it. Despite Havel's objections, Czechoslovakia split. The "lustration" campaign to bar from certain jobs informers and other guilty people from the old era was a confused and traumatic process. "Why so much velvet?" some asked. Why appoint a Presidential team of inexperienced exiles and dissidents and tarnished Party hacks? Havel was sui generis to the end: he did not form a lasting party or movement; he had admirers, he had aides, but he has no real inheritor. In fact, as he left office, parliament could not settle on a successor.

Havel's most serious and persistent enemy through the years has been his political doppelgänger, the former Prime Minister Václav Klaus. For a decade, their relationship became the running story of Prague politics. Klaus is a technocrat and a Thatcherite—and, it must be said, a steely and arrogant man. He has always resented the "intellectuals in

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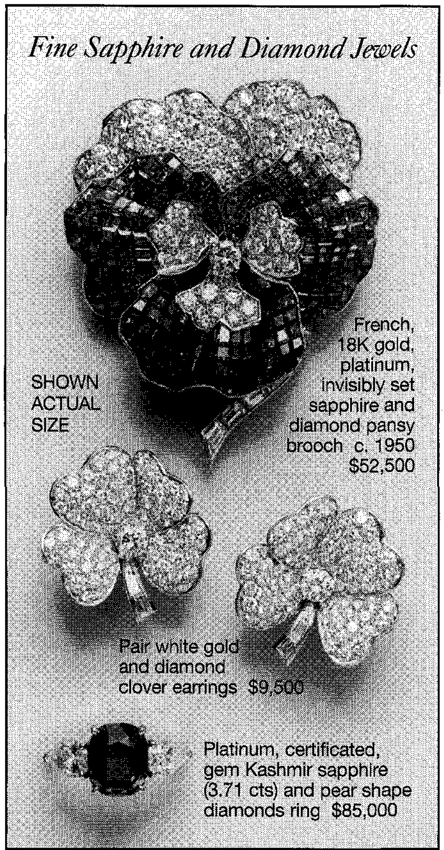
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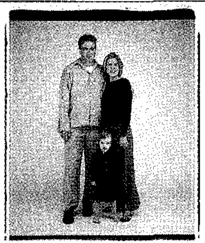
The family, early Saturday morning, April 20, 2002.

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the Castle," and accused Havel of being a "half-socialist," in "love with state power." In 2001, he said of Havel, "I don't believe what he says, what he stands for, what he does. I don't understand his civil society. For me it is an empty phrase. . . . He is the most élitist person I have ever seen in my life. I am a normal person. He is not."

And yet, with those notable exceptions, almost everyone is quick to point out the dimensions of Havel's moral and political achievements, his importance in the reshaping of Europe. For a country that had lost so many of its best minds to deportation, Holocaust, exile, emigration, and suppression, Havel embodied a sense of the future and of Czech idealism. As a dissident and then as President, he was the most incisive Czech voice on reviving civil liberties and human rights, on restoring a sense of public responsibility at a moment of post-Communist apathy and greed. Havel was a playwright and essayist who wrote as if censorship did not exist; when he became a politician, he behaved as if his country, small as it is, were indispensable to the reordering of Europe. With his moral authority and moral glamour, he exerted an outsized influence. Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and other leaders of the major powers were deeply influenced by him. The rapid expansion and redefinition of NATO is, in no small measure, Havel's doing.

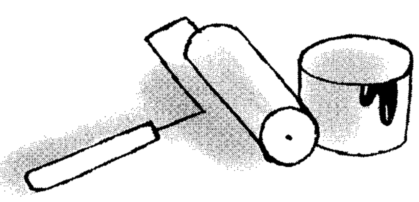
One afternoon, I went to a farewell reception for Havel at the Castle. Hundreds of Castle aides, past and present, gathered in the Spanish Hall, under the Rolling Stones' chandeliers, and milled around, drinking beer, eating sandwiches, and lining up to say goodbye to their old boss. Havel posed for snapshots, accepted advice and best wishes—sometimes with pleasure, sometimes with a grimace usually reserved for a periodontist. Havel possesses a charisma peculiar to the shy. He is rather small, with tiny hands that play nervously at his lapels. He tends to speak to the floor or to your shoulder. Everyone leaned in to listen. Everyone laughed at his jokes.

Nearby, I ran into Michael Žantovský, one of his closest associates over the years. Žantovský had been a dissident and was the author of a book about Woody Allen; after the revolution, he'd been Ambassador to the United States.

"I think this is the fifth or sixth farewell party, and there's more to come," Žantovský said merrily. "There was the so-called underground farewell, and, of course, at that one everyone got drunk." Then the diplomat waxed grand. "This is the end of an era," he said. "It means the end of transition, it means the end of changes and setbacks and new beginnings, you name it. What's going to happen now is that we will become a country like any other in Europe. Maybe I'm cynical, but these moments in history, for a person or a country, come and go. It's like Andy Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame, and ours was Havel's Presidency—especially the first years. Sometime in the future, it may come again, but at this point we are no more glamorous than Belgium or the Netherlands. As Brecht said, 'Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes.' I hope we don't need another." He drank to that.

Václav Klaus may despise Václav Havel, but he has a point: Havel is not a normal man. "I am just beginning to understand how everything has, in fact, been a diabolical trap set for me by destiny," Havel said on a recent trip to New York, his last as President. "I really was catapulted overnight into a world of fairy tales."

Havel was born in 1936, before the sellout of Czechoslovakia at Munich and the Nazi occupation, before the Communist putsch. He was born to good fortune. His father was a wealthy businessman, and his parents had a broad circle of highly educated friends. There was a cook, a governess, a maid, a gardener, and a chauffeur. The Havels wanted their sons, Václav and Ivan, to graduate from Oxford or Harvard. As boys, they went to boarding school. When the Communists took power, in 1948, the Havel family properties were confiscated, and, in an act of reverse social engineering, the regime barred bour-



geois children like Václav from the better schools. Had it not been for the putsch, Havel once said, he would likely have "gone on to study philosophy at the university, attended . . . lectures on comparative literature, and, after graduation, I would have ridden around in an imported sports car without having done the least thing to deserve it."

With a spotty formal education, Havel gravitated to the theatre, particularly the Theatre on the Balustrade, which was a center of bohemian artists. His younger brother, Ivan, a cognitive scientist, said, "Coming from a bourgeois family, my brother was exposed to literature and many interesting people, but he felt bad, slightly guilty about it. In his literary circles, he was the rare bourgeois and he was embarrassed by it." This was Prague in the sixties, a more relaxed time, and Havel quickly adapted to a life of late-night discussions in smoky kitchens and the Café Slavia, beer and Becherovka, love affairs, samizdat, and rock and roll. His musical tastes ran to the Velvet Underground and, especially, to the Plastic People of the Universe. In his twenties and early thirties, he wrote a series of plays—"The Garden Party," "The Memorandum," and "The Increased Difficulty of Concentration"—that were all understood by their audiences as implicit critiques of the regime: its stifling "automatism" (a favorite term of Havel's), its inhuman language. Those plays, which were produced abroad as specimens of the cultural thaw, became emblems of the Prague Spring permitted by the Party reformer Alexander Dubček.

In the mid-sixties, Havel, to the despair of his mother, married a poor yet regal young woman named Olga Šplíchalová. Until her death from cancer, in 1996, Olga was a levelheaded balance to Havel's idealism and to his trusting nature; she was a practical intelligence and, through years of harassment and imprisonment, an indefatigable support. "Olga and I are very different," Havel once said. "Olga's a working-class girl, very much her own person, sober, unsentimental, and she can even be somewhat mouthy and obnoxious; in other words, as we say, you can't get her drunk on a bun. . . . In Olga, I found exactly what I needed: someone who could respond to my own mental instability, to offer sober criticism of my wilder ideas, provide private support for my public adventures."

After the Soviet Union invaded Prague, ousted Dubček, and instituted a period of hard-line "normalization" that lasted for more than twenty years, the Communist Party banned Havel's works. For his part, Havel moved to a country house that he and Olga called Hrádeček (the Little Castle), and he veered increasingly toward a position of full-time dissent. Thrilling as "The Garden Party" was for young audiences in Prague, this next phase was even more important—and, perhaps, even more appropriate to Havel's real talents. "Havel has been a politician since the sixties," the novelist Ivan Klíma told me. "His plays were exciting in their time and place, they had great meaning, but they tend to lose their context now, especially abroad."

Far more ambitious, and more lasting, were Havel's dissident essays, especially an open letter to the Communist leader Gustav Husák and "The Power of the Powerless," which served as the most extensive theoretical underpinning for Charter 77 and Czech resistance. Havel's prose reached its audience in a variety of subterranean ways: in typewritten, carbon-copied manuscripts; in books that were published abroad and then smuggled back into the country; or as broadcasts on Radio Free Europe. (As President, Havel repaid RFE by making it possible for the studios and offices to move, in 1995, from Munich to Wenceslas Square.)

If Solzhenitsyn was the great witness of Communist oppression within the imperium, Havel was its most acute moral clinician. "Havel synthesized ideas that were in the air here and, as it turned out, all over the totalitarian world," Ivan Havel said. In those two essays, he describes the "entropy" of life under Communist oppression, the myriad everyday means by which every man and woman is "subjected to a prolonged and thorough process of violation, enfeeblement and anesthesia." When I visited Havel at the Castle, his aides were packing his effects, including a painting of a Communist-era sign reading, in Slovak, "Workers of the

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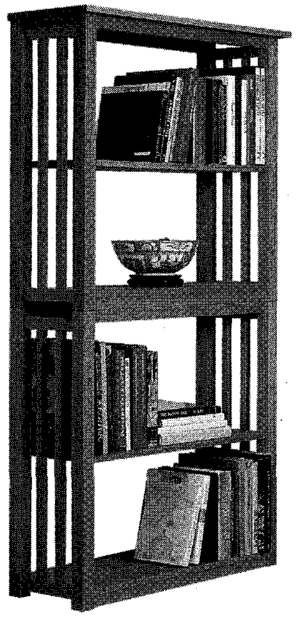

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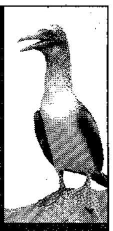

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World Unite!" In the best-known passage of "The Power of the Powerless," Havel asks his reader to imagine the manager of a grocery who puts that sign in his store window, "among the onions and carrots":

> What is he trying to communicate to the world? Is he genuinely enthusiastic about the idea of unity among the workers of the world? . . . He does it because these things must be done if one is to get along in life. It is one of the thousands of details that guarantee him a relatively tranquil life.

The power of totalitarian ideology, he wrote, is that it acts as "a veil behind which human beings can hide their own fallen existence, their trivialization, and their adaptation to the status quo. . . . It is rather like a collection of traffic signals and directional signs, giving the process shape and structure. This metaphysical order guarantees the inner coherence of the totalitarian power structure. It is the glue holding it together, its binding principle, the instrument of its discipline."

Havel describes dissent not as an alternative political ideology but, rather, as an individual's insistence on his own humanity, on thinking and doing things, even the smallest things, honestly. In the mid-seventies, Havel had to make his living by working in a brewery, and, in "The Power of the Powerless," he recalls a dispute at the plant. A worker there spoke out to his bosses about ways to improve production. He was not an intellectual or a political rebel, just someone with an idea on how to produce beer more efficiently. But he had dared defy his bosses, and that could not be tolerated. All too often, Havel wrote, living normally "begins as an attempt to do your work well, and ends with being branded an enemy of society."

And so it did with Havel. As an analyst, he wrote that the system could not tolerate even the slightest challenge, because its existence depended for its survival on unanimity. As a result, Havel knew that the knock on the door could come at any time. In a samizdat interview, he said, "I've put together something I call my 'emergency packet,' containing cigarettes, a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, some books, a T-shirt, paper, a laxative, and a few other small things." He took this bundle along with him every time he left his house.

With good reason. Between 1977 and 1989, Havel was imprisoned several times and in many different cells. His longest term lasted from 1979 to 1983, and his singular relief from the drudgery of those years was writing a weekly letter home. "Letters to Olga," filled with everything from complaints about his hemorrhoids and Olga's inconstancy as a correspondent to ruminations on Being and political responsibility, is his most personal book. Havel wrote the letters under terrific pressure, including that of a pro-Nazi warden who made sure the letters had no mysterious erasures or codes. Working in the laundry, he said, "I hid my rough drafts in a mountain of dirty sheets stained by millions of unborn children, and I would revise them during the noon break, while trying to avoid being seen by informers."

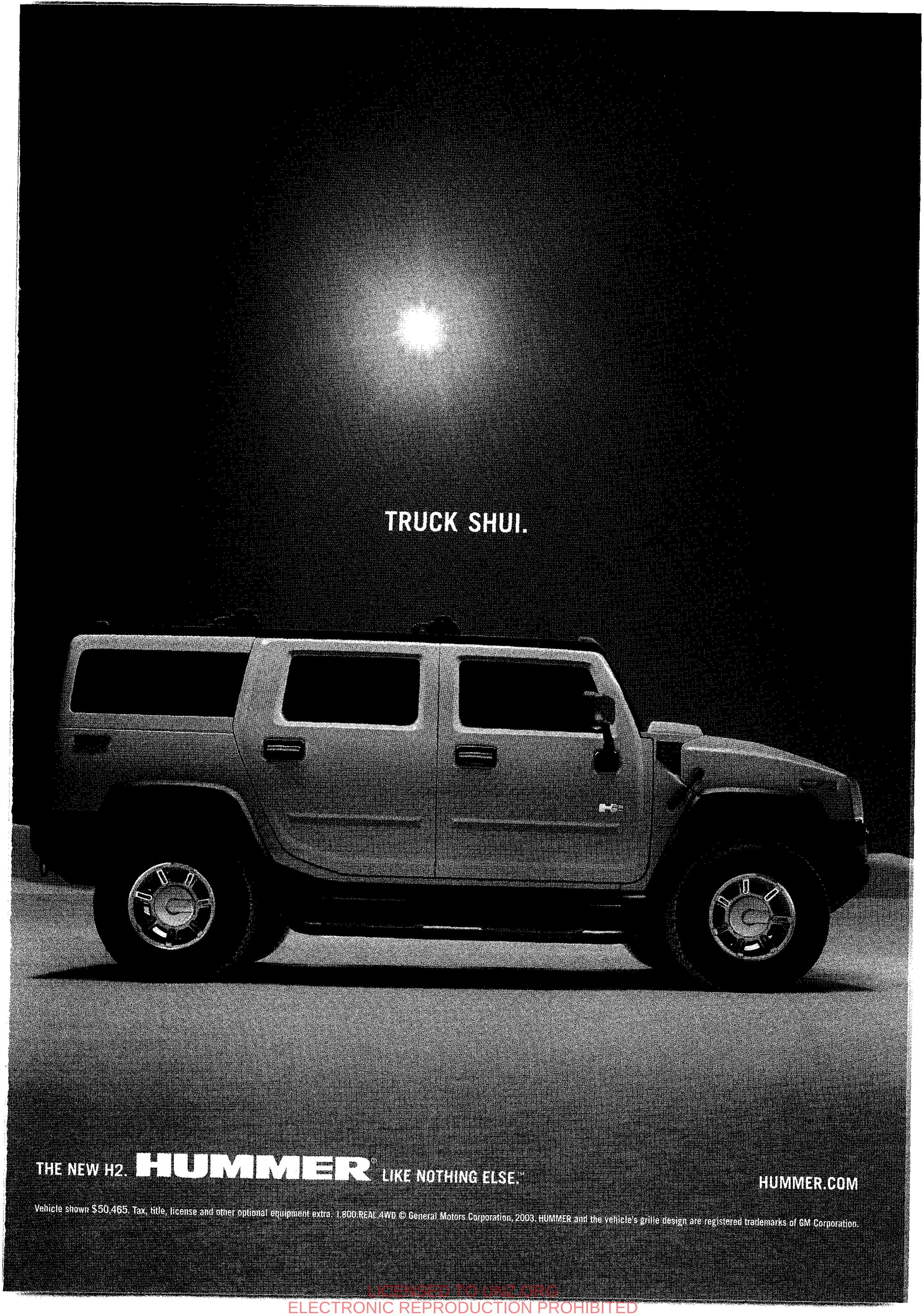
The only visitors allowed were Olga and Ivan. They were permitted to come four times a year for half-hour visits. When I asked Ivan about those visits, he laughed ruefully. "I saw him more often when he was in jail than I do now," he said.

One night during Havel's frenetic last week as President, there was a gala held in his honor at the National Theatre, a black-tie-and-evening-gown sort of affair with lots of television cameras outside and government ministers and pop stars in the audience. I went along to the gala with Jiří Pehe, a former exile who had returned to Prague after the revolution and become one of Havel's closest advisers. He told me that the gala had been organized by Havel's second wife, an actress named Dagmar Veškrnová, whom everyone knows, simply, as Dáša. Unlike Olga, who had impeccable dissident credentials, Dáša was a movie and television actress who during "normalization" appeared occasionally in productions of Shakespeare and Strindberg but more often in mediocre comedies; she once played a topless vampire. The gala, Pehe said, was controversial because the musical lineup would run more to Andrew Lloyd Webber than to Havel's favorites, Lou Reed and Frank Zappa. He was not exaggerating. Sometimes I thought I was watching a taping of a Bob Hope Christmas special. Dáša had even invited Karel Gott, an oleaginous crooner who was the epitome of "coöperative" under the Communists. Some of Havel's old Charter 77 friends, including the singers Jaroslav Hutka and Vlasta Třešňák, boycotted the event. Prague is the smallish capital of a smallish republic; often enough, its politics are the politics of a village. Some Czechs, it seemed, could never forgive figures like Gott; others could never forgive Havel for marrying Dáša.

"Olga was much more than a partner," Pehe told me. "Havel was a bohemian and did wild things, and there were many other women, but he always went back: she was a tough, moral lady. She treated him like a boy, in a sense, and he liked that, he needed that corrective. When she was gone, a part of his universe collapsed. He remarried too quickly, in the humble opinion of the public."

In Havel's opinion, Dáša saved his life. A chain smoker and a veteran of Czech jails, Havel had suffered from pneumonias, a perforated bowel, and various other illnesses. "He's nearly killed himself in the job," Havel's friend the writer Timothy Garton Ash told me. "He's been close to death several times." The closest call came in late 1996. Havel's doctor found a spot on his lungs and treated him for pneumonia. Havel continued suffering fevers and double vision. Finally, doctors determined that he had cancer and removed half his right lung. (Just before going into the operating room, Havel was shown on television smoking with his Minister of Health.) Dáša fired the doctor who had misdiagnosed Havel. (She also summoned a faith healer, but never mind.) The crisis was not over. One day at the hospital, according to Havel's biographer, John Keane, Dáša went to visit him in intensive care. He was on a ventilator and seemed to be choking. Dáša called for help, rescuing him. A few weeks later, Havel and Dáša married.

With the image of Olga still strong in the public mind, Havel felt compelled to explain himself to the nation. "Before she died, Olga said I should remarry," Havel said. "At the time, I ruled it out categorically, and I was resolved to end my days alone. She was convinced that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I can't live alone and that I shouldn't. She was right, and life itself confirmed that when I was lucky enough to get to know Dáša."

At the gala, Havel sat in the Presidential box with Dáša and gazed down at the stage with utter delight. He was egalitarian in his applause. He clapped for Karel Gott and he clapped for Ivan Král, a former exile who sang a ballad by the Plastic People of the Universe and then Patti Smith's "Dancing Barefoot." But Havel's greatest visible pleasure came when an actor walked to the lip of the stage and read the text of a denunciation of the leaders of Charter 77, published in the Communist Party newspaper *Rudé Právo* twenty-five years ago under the headline "THE SHIPWRECKED AND THE SELF-APPOINTED." At the time of that article, the Party leader Gustav Husák had confidently announced that the Charter 77 movement would collapse and Havel and "the hired puppets of these campaigns will end up in the dustbin of history." It all seemed so funny now.

Another day at the Castle, this time in the company of Oldřich Černy, a compact fellow with perfect English. For many years, Černy made his living dubbing Hollywood movies in Czech. When he was a teen-ager, he saw "The Garden Party" and asked to meet the playwright. Černy eventually became friends with Havel and ran errands for the coalition of forces called Civic Forum, which was at the center of the revolution. After Havel took office, James Baker, who was then George H. W. Bush's Secretary of State, delivered to the Czechs a C.I.A. briefing book outlining everything the Americans knew about the security forces under the Communists. Havel, whose English is limited, asked Černy to translate the documents; later, he asked him to become his national-security adviser. Every time Černy mentioned that title to me, he smiled and made the universal sign for ironical quotation marks. "I wasn't exactly Condoleezza Rice," he said.

After the revolution, he continued, "we were babes in the woods, and so I went to the West for help." Officials from MI6 and the C.I.A. helped the Czechs rebuild the security system, ridding it, above all, of its function as a private police and army force for the government. Even now, years after leaving the Castle, Černy, like so many others, can't forget the arrival. He said, "When we first went into the Castle, it was so strange—sparsely furnished in the Communist style of a taste for the distasteful, with huge fake-leather chairs that made you freeze in the winter and stuck to the back of your trousers in summer."

We finished lunch and took a walk to the old summer residence, a two-story villa, on the Castle grounds.

*"So is Cameron Diaz really a babe, or is that another thing we've been led to believe by the biased media?"*

"This was Husák's house," Černy said as we strolled past a guard and approached the front door. "I still have the key."

We went upstairs. Černy started rapping his knuckles against the walls and the ceilings, which were unusually low. "When we first got here, I noticed that my cell-phone reception was very bad," he said. "It turns out that Husák was paranoid. He had all the ceilings reinforced with concrete. Turns out he thought someone was going to fire cruise missiles at him."

Černy took me to the basement. And there was Husák's favorite indulgence: a swimming pool with a wave machine. "He was quite a swimmer," he said.

Early in his Presidency, Havel lived for a few months in Husák's house. Naturally, this was a torture. "I find myself in the world of privileges, exceptions, perks, in the world of V.I.P.s who gradually lose track of how much a streetcar ticket or butter costs, how to make a cup of coffee, how to drive a car, and how to place a telephone call," he said. Eventually, he got used to it all, though he never refilled Husák's swimming pool. There was too much work to do, thousands of documents to consider, a broken state to rebuild.

"From what I know, Havel cannot wait to step down," Černy told me. "He is exhausted, and he is not a healthy man. He also takes things very hard. When it became clear that the President couldn't save everyone's life, it became a ritual for young Czech journalists—almost as a rite of initiation—to write terrible things about Havel, and he never got used to that. There was even a psychosomatic aspect to this: he would get depressed and his body began to ache."

The day after leaving office, Havel was scheduled to take a five-week vacation abroad. He is always coughing, and warm weather has been good for his lungs. At times, he has said that he might work on an "absurdist play" or a book-length conversation with Timothy Garton Ash and Adam Michnik. His aide Vladimír Hanzel told me that Havel had not kept a diary in office and so there would not likely be a memoir, or not in the traditional sense. One morning, I was eating breakfast in a café near St. Vitus' cathedral, and I read in the Prague *Post* that Havel in fact would write a memoir, but that it would be "somewhere between Henry Kissinger and Charles Bukowski."

In a sense, he's been writing that memoir all his life. I remembered reading a short piece of his, from 1987, in which he recalled walking near the National Theatre and, by chance, seeing Gorbachev, who was in town for a summit with the Czech Party leaders. He caught sight of the Soviet leader amid the crowds and the bodyguards:

> All of a sudden I find myself feeling sorry for him. I try to imagine the life he must lead, all day long in the company of his hard-faced guardians, no doubt with a full agenda, endless meetings, negotiating sessions, and speeches: having to talk to a great many people; remember who is who; say witty things but at the same time make sure they are the *correct* things to say, things that the sensation-seeking outside world can't get hold of and use against him.

In my meeting with Havel at the Castle, I recalled that passage for him, and he laughed. I asked him if, in some way, he had become what he had pitied.

Havel shrugged and began speaking, all the while staring at the carpet. "I remember," he said. "Of course, I met Gorbachev about two months after I was elected President. We went to Moscow, for my first visit to the Kremlin, and we met for eight or nine hours. At first, Gorbachev looked at me as if I were some kind of exotic creature—the first living dissident he ever saw, who was coming to him as the head of a state that had been part of his realm. But, gradually, we developed a kind of friendship, which had even begun to develop at the end of that first long visit to the Kremlin." Havel lifted his head and smiled. "I used to be a smoker then, and, after two hours of our conversation, I asked Gorbachev whether I could have a cigarette. He said, 'Yes, please, go ahead and smoke.' He didn't call to his staff, but, all the same, somebody suddenly appeared with an ashtray. There must have been microphones there, I suppose."

A year after Havel came to power, there was a crisis in Iraq, and now, as he was leaving office, he was involved in another. Earlier in the month, he had spent hours with his aides at his country villa, discussing the problem, and that day, in the *Wall Street Journal*, there was a letter signed by Havel, along with seven other European leaders, which essentially agreed with the Bush Administration's position. I asked him why.

"I think it's not by chance that the idea of confronting evil may have found more support in those countries that have had a recent experience with totalitarian systems compared with other European countries that haven't had the same sort of recent experience," he said. "The Czech experience with Munich, with appeasement, with yielding to evil, with demanding more and more evidence that Hitler was truly evil—that may be one reason that we look at things differently than some others. But that doesn't mean automatically that a green light is to be given to preventive strikes. I always believed that every case has to be judged individually. The Euro-American world cannot simply declare preëmptive war on all the regimes that it doesn't like."

Havel coughed and took a sip of wine. I asked him why he thought a policy of containment could not work in Iraq more or less indefinitely.

He put his glass down and said, "Civilization has changed. Today, any crazy, practically any crazy person can blow up half of New York. That was hardly possible fifteen or twenty years ago. That's not the only reason. On the whole, the world has changed. There once was a bipolar world, a balance of two great powers, who made agreements on weapons reductions, so that they were capable of destroying the world seven times instead of ten. Now we live in a multipolar world. . . . Of course, the question is: When is the best time for action? Should it have happened a long time ago? That is a political issue, a diplomatic issue, a sociological issue. But, generally, it's a matter of the functioning of the world's immune system, whether the world can deal with such a case of extreme evil before it is too late."

On Sunday night, February 2nd, Czech radio and television broadcast Havel's farewell address. He took pains to thank his wife and his supporters. To all those who felt disappointed "or have simply found me hateful, I sincerely apologize and trust that you will forgive me." Havel flashed his country the peace sign and his work was done. ♦

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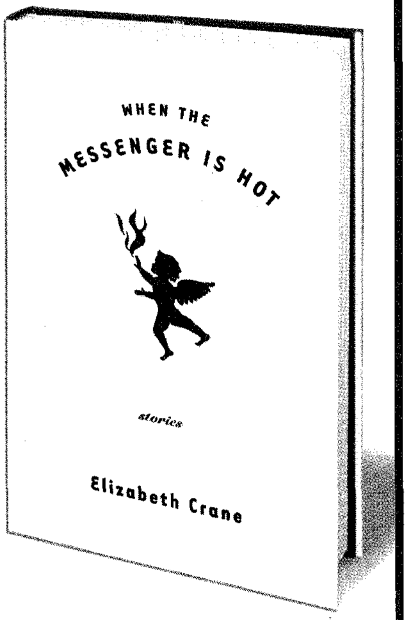

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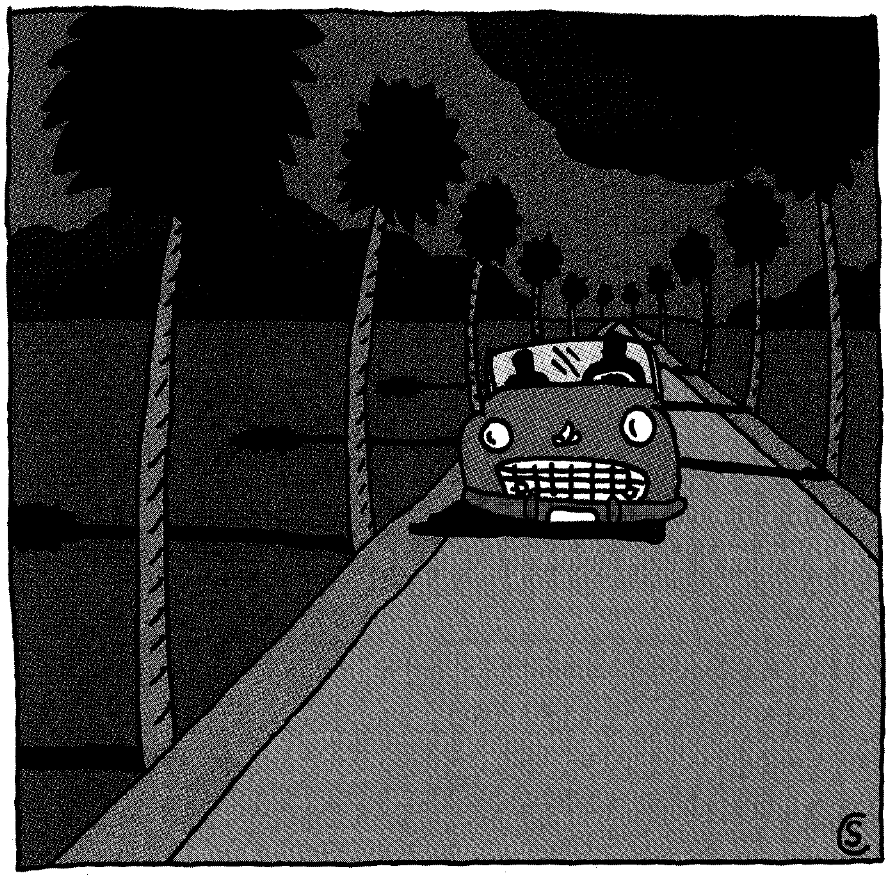
PERSONAL HISTORY

# A.K.A. SAM

*As I remember him.*

BY DONALD ANTRIM



*My uncle created the exquisite illusion that he was his own man, and free.*

SEYMOUR CHWAST

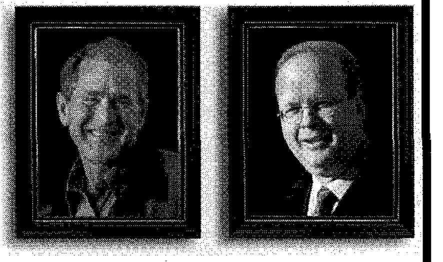
In the back seat he kept a bicycle with the front wheel removed. I never saw him put the wheel on and ride. Next to the bicycle was a golf bag holding woods and irons, balls, tees, pencils for scoring, golf gloves, a visor. Adjacent to the clubs were a couple of beach chairs folded and jammed between the car's front and back seats, and wedged on the seat were towels and a cooler chest, into which he loaded, every day or two, ice, beer, and strawberry, grape, and orange sodas. In the car's trunk, as I remember it, were his tennis racquets with their protective covers zippered on, and a tennis bag like those the pros carry onto the court, stuffed with balls in cans, cotton sweatbands, shorts, shirts, tennis shoes, socks, and a hat. There was a football for playing catch at the beach, and a pump for pumping up the ball. There were baseball mitts and a baseball; and there was fishing gear—a takedown rod stored in its elegant cylindrical case, and a small tackle kit packed with hooks, lures, and line—and there was swimming and scuba equipment, too, including a mask, fins, a snorkel, a dive knife, a depth gauge, a regulator, a buoyancy vest, a weight belt, and sometimes, shoved up into the back of the trunk, a small tank that actually belonged to me. In the event that he had occasion to dress nicely on land, he had what was minimally required. Pressed trousers. A never-worn shirt. A tie, rolled up. Changes of underwear. Thin socks. A belt. Black shoes with shoe trees shoved into them. Shoe polish. A rag for polishing. There was a shaving kit holding a razor and soap, shampoo, talcum powder, a toothbrush and toothpaste, a hairbrush and a comb, and plenty of the English Leather cologne he splashed on at intervals throughout his day. There was a battery-operated portable record-player, and Everly Brothers, Clancy Brothers, and Smothers Brothers records to play on it. For reading, he carried a collection of hunting, tennis, golf, and archery magazines, *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, and books by D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Lawrence Durrell. For shooting, he kept, in a space near the tire well, a .22 pistol in a leather case; and sometimes there was a double-barrelled shotgun, also in a case; and, when he had the shotgun packed in the car and planned to do some shooting with it, there might also be a cardboard box containing clay pigeons, many of which I threw for him, using a spring-loaded contraption designed for manually launching the fragile yellow disks. There was no shortage of ammo. And there were many things relating to the maintenance of the car in specific and to safe travel in general: sparkplugs, antifreeze in a jug, motor oil in a can, socket wrenches, jumper cables, sulfur flares. There was tanning lotion; and there were Band-Aids and other medical supplies, including an Ace bandage; and writing materials and postage stamps; and, tucked here and there in nooks and crannies, golf shoes, an umbrella, a rain poncho, a thermos, a Swiss Army knife, a fibreglass hunting bow along with arrows and a leather band to protect the archer's arm; bottle and can openers; a waterproof flashlight and spare batteries; *Playboy* pinups either removed or fallen from their magazines; a pair of binoculars; a Frisbee; and, fresh in their box from the store, a brand-new pair of size-12 Top-Siders.

Sometimes, on days off from his job, loading Canada Dry trucks at a warehouse near the airport in Sarasota, Florida, he'd drive to a secluded place in the woods, where he would set up one of the folding beach chairs, place beside it the cooler and a handful of his books and magazines, put a record on the record-player, and sit listening to folk music, flipping through the magazines, looking at the world through his binoculars, sipping beer, and, every now and then, shooting pistol rounds at empty cans he'd propped on tree branches or rotting fence posts in the distance. One day, according to my mother, state and federal agents surrounded him and threw him to the ground and handcuffed him, because he had been spotted by surveillance teams sent in advance of President Nixon, who was about to land in Sarasota on Air Force One. When the agents took him to the local police station, the chief of police told them, "Oh, that's just Bob Antrim, he doesn't mean a bit of harm," which was true enough; and so they promptly let him go.

My father's younger brother, Robert Eldridge Antrim, known in his family as Eldridge to distinguish him from his father, also Robert, and among his friends as Bob, was also occasionally called Sam. The name Sam in relation to my uncle first appeared in the mid-fifties, in the sports pages of a Sarasota newspaper, in an article glorifying the Sarasota High School golf team, for which Eldridge was a star player. In fact, it was Eldridge who had reported his name as Sam, presumably because he had grown tired of Eldridge. It was a joke; and the joke stuck, though by the end of his life the only person still calling him Sam was my mother, who was with him at the Sarasota Memorial Hospital when he died, in 1992, of acute alcohol poisoning. When I was young, I knew my uncle as Eldridge. For a few years, when I was a teen-ager, he was a hero to me. Today, when I think of him, he is Bob; and I think this transformation from Eldridge to Bob by way of Sam has something to do with the effect he had on my life, in particular the effect of a single incident that took place when I was fourteen.

We were living in Miami, my mother, my father, my sister, our absurd cats—Zelda Fitzgerald and the neurologically impaired Siamese, Justine—and I. Eldridge, during those years, the early seventies, lived up the Gulf Coast in Sarasota, in a suburban tract house he shared with his mother, my grandmother Eliza. The story of Eliza's life is, in some ways, unusual for a woman of her time and from her part of the world. She grew up during the early years of the twentieth century, in Richmond, Virginia, in what was, by all accounts, a strict Episcopalian home ruled by a father who was stern with his sons and repressively doting toward his only daughter, who nevertheless managed to escape to nearby Randolph-Macon Woman's College,

Who Voted for Karl Rove?



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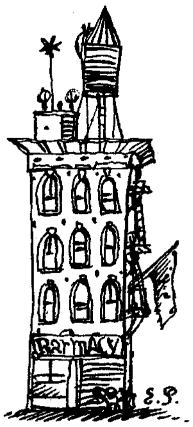
and then to Columbia University, where she got a master's degree in Spanish. During her years away at school, a medical student from San Juan, Puerto Rico, took up residence in her father's house. Over the course of her vacations at home, Eliza fell in love with this man, and even went so far as to board ship and sail with him to Puerto Rico to visit his home. Rafael was, according to family lore, the love of my grandmother's life. I imagine him as a person formed in a certain European mold: erudite and very likely soft-spoken, a man wearing clothes made to draw attention away from his physique, from, as it were, his person—not in order to obscure the fact that he is, in my mental picture of him, neither tall nor fit but, rather, to hide, out of sheer politeness, his intrinsic attractiveness, which is to say his unsuitability as a life partner for a young woman brought up in an essentially Victorian household. About matters so far removed in time and sensibility from one's own, one can only guess. My father told me that when Rafael's stay in America ended he begged Eliza to marry him. She made it clear that she loved him but could never marry a Catholic. And that, apparently, was that. Her lover went home without her. They saw each other once or twice again over the years. And then, when she was very old and in failing health, and as if bearing out the eroticism inherent in loving a person one cannot bring oneself to marry, she did something surprising and beautiful. She bought a plane ticket for San Juan. She did not tell anyone her intentions. She appears to have had no specific intentions. Alone in Puerto Rico, she visited the places she remembered from her time there with Rafael, who had died a year or two earlier.



Eliza's life, it seems to me, turned out quite differently from whatever she might have hoped for when she was a woman in her twenties, taking flight, however incompletely or abortively, from her father's house. It is my understanding that after she returned home from New York she lived for a time in a sort of domestic captivity, like a Virginian Elizabeth Barrett Browning, until it was arranged that she would marry a distant cousin, Robert Antrim, a man older than she, a man she likely did not love passionately. Robert Antrim was in those years the manager of the Blandy Experimental Farm, now the Virginia State Arboretum, a University of Virginia teaching farm near Winchester. He was taciturn and hardworking, and he and Eliza had two sons. Then one day Robert Antrim took it into his head that it was his destiny to raise gladioli in Florida. He and his brother, Frank, had for some time been going on annual car trips together—speechless two-week-long excursions to central Florida and back. They had an old Ford, and were known for driving slowly.

I can attest to the slow driving. Many years after Robert and his brother took their first trips down the Atlantic seaboard, and long after Robert had settled his family in Sarasota, near the end of his life, when my sister and I were young, he used to drive us, in his blue Mercedes diesel sedan, to the Ringling Museum of the Circus, part of the grandiose folly of an estate left by the great John Ringling after he fell into debt and, in 1936, the same year my father was born, died of pneumonia. I remember from those trips that my grandfather never drove his Mercedes at a speed greater than twenty-five miles an hour—in contrast to my other grandfather, Don Self, who kept in his carport Oldsmobiles and Buicks of the massive sort that easily handled ninety on the interstate—and I remember, in some way that is as much emotional as pictorial, the scenery that characterized that part of Florida in the years before the Gulf Coast became the densely populated, semi-urban landscape it is now.

Coastal Florida at that time was much as one might have imagined it, and, I suspect, much as people would have liked it—people who, like my father's family from Virginia and my mother's from Tennessee, moved South to get in on one of the miniature economic booms, which, during the forties, fifties, and sixties, spurred growth and brought jobs to the developing seaside sprawl. Florida in those long-gone days was a realm of tannin-black rivers and crystal springs; of live, unpolluted oyster beds two feet under the shallow bay and estuary waters; of red tile roofs showing here and there above the royal palms and the mangrove that opened onto white beaches accessible by humpbacked bridges that were always crowded, in the magic hours before sundown, with fishermen reeling in grouper, snapper, and snook. What I remember most from my early childhood in Florida is an intensity of color both in and above the water, as clouds swept eastward over the ocean, bringing afternoon showers that could begin with a few drops carried on the wind, then abruptly open up and rain down, flooding the streets, the sidewalks, the lawns and tennis courts, the entire world, it seemed to me, before eventually blowing inland. Often, during storms, a greenish cast of light filled the subtropical sky over Siesta Key, infusing the palm fronds and the leaves of the trees with an even brighter green, yet turning the gulf and the bay, into whose low swells gulls and pelicans were forever diving, a deep, almost olive shade that I have never seen in water anywhere else.

But what about my taciturn grandfather and his taciturn brother? Legend has it that, on a certain slow pilgrimage to Titusville or Arcadia, they pulled into one of the ubiquitous roadside places where plaster birdbaths and imitation Greek and Roman statuary got sold to migrants and retirees with delusions of grandeur. Using as few words as possible, the brothers asked the owner what he thought his inventory might be worth in cash. The owner told them that he imagined the entire stock might be worth about forty dollars. Without another word, the brothers produced the forty dollars, a twenty-dollar bill apiece, a grand amount for workingmen in the years immediately following the Second World War. They started the car and drove wordlessly down the road about a quarter mile—I don't know which of them, Robert or Frank, was at the wheel—then turned the car around, motored back up the highway, steered into the entrance to the lot, and plowed through the statues, destroying, at some remarkably low velocity, every one. It is hard to know how to judge this story, particularly given that neither brother was much of a talker; and so I wonder

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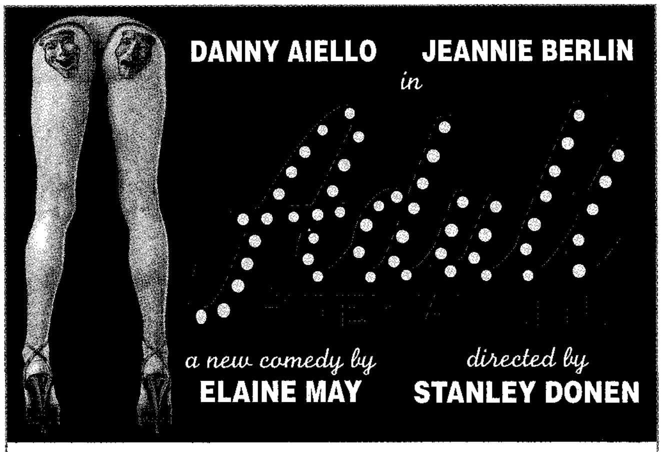
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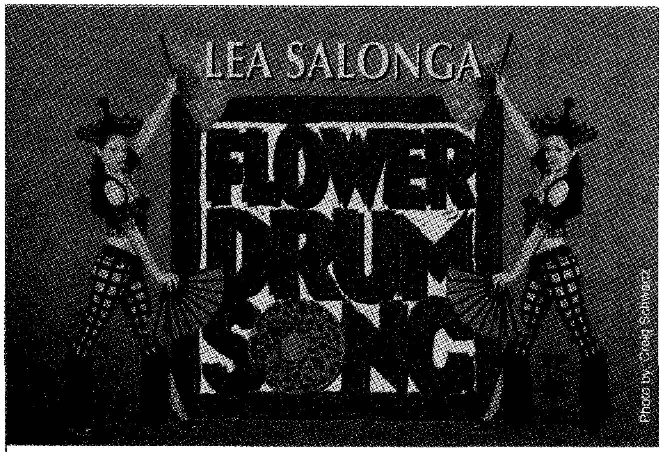
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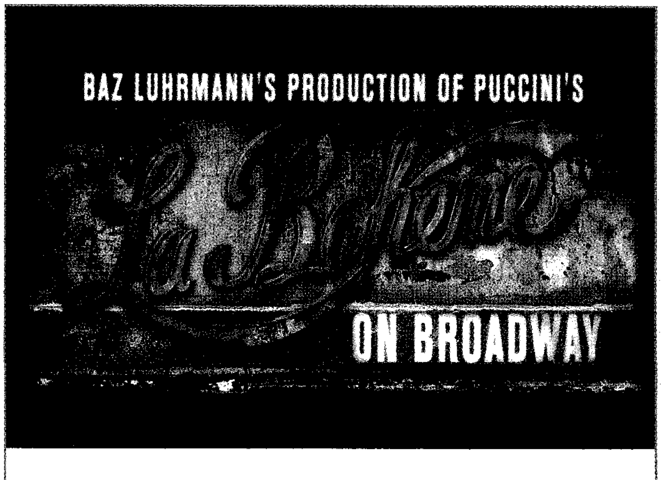
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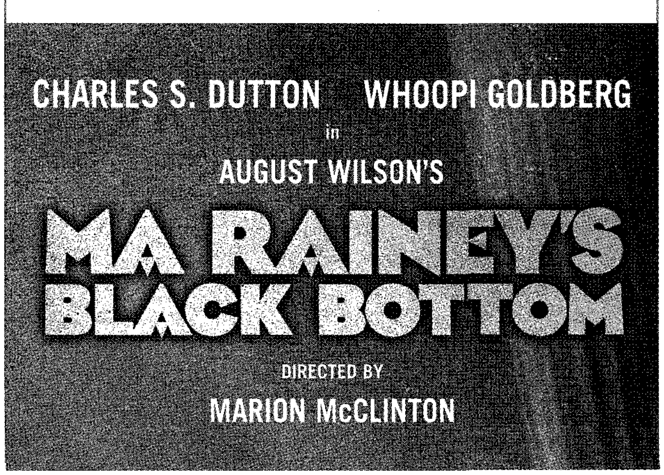
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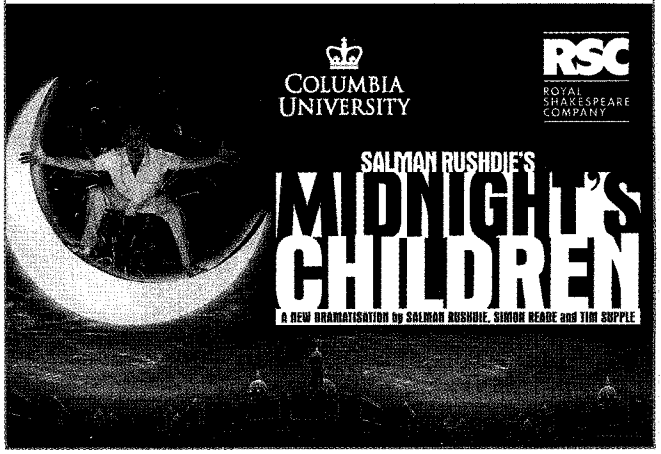
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DANCE COMPANY
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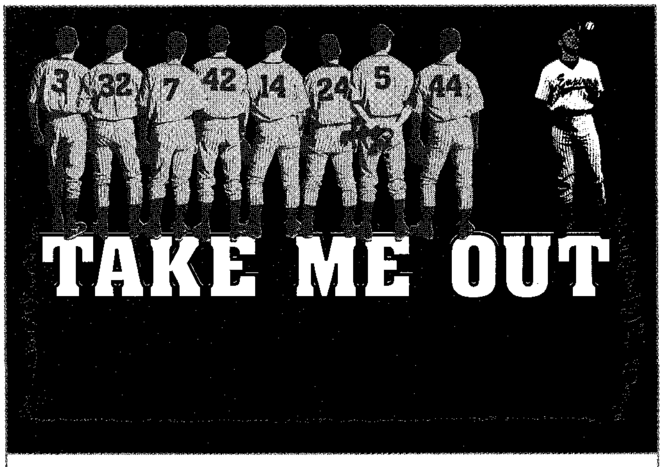
**Paul Taylor Dance Company**

The Paul Taylor Dance Company performs eleven dances, including *Esplanade* and two New York premières, March 4th to 16th. *The New York Times* calls the new *Promethean Fire* "quite simply one of the best dance works choreographed by Paul Taylor." **City Center, 55th Street between 6th and 7th avenues, 212-581-1212** or **www.citycenter.org**



**Take Me Out**

America's national pastime gets thrown a curve in Richard Greenberg's "Take Me Out," directed by Joe Mantello. Already named "one of the year's top ten" by *Entertainment Weekly*, the *New York Post*, the *New York Daily News*, *The Star-Ledger*, and *Time Out New York*, this off-Broadway sensation moves to Broadway this month. **Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 West 48th Street, 212-239-6200** or **www.telecharge.com**

**Thoroughly Modern Millie**

Broadway's Best Musical is the year's biggest Tony Award® winner, hailed by *USA Today* as a "thoroughly delightful experience." *The Wall Street Journal* calls it "a lively, giddy, and just plain swell valentine to New York." **Marquis Theatre, Broadway at 46th Street, 212-307-4100** or **www.modernmillie.com**

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**The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra**

The orchestra that sets the bar for all others visits Philadelphia for the first time in thirty years. Don't miss this rare engagement. Berg's *Violin Concerto (1935)* with violinist Gidon Kremer and Bruckner's *Symphony No. 4 "Romantic"* will be performed under the direction of Nikolaus Harnoncourt. March 5th at 8 P.M. **Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Broad and Spruce streets, Philadelphia, 215-893-1999** or **www.kimmelcenter.org**

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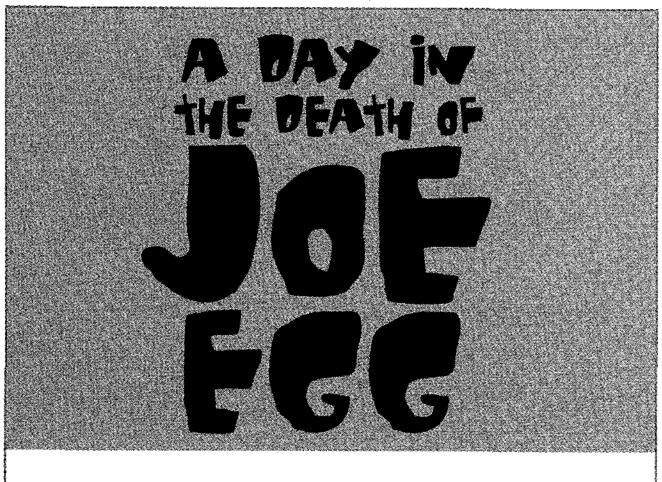
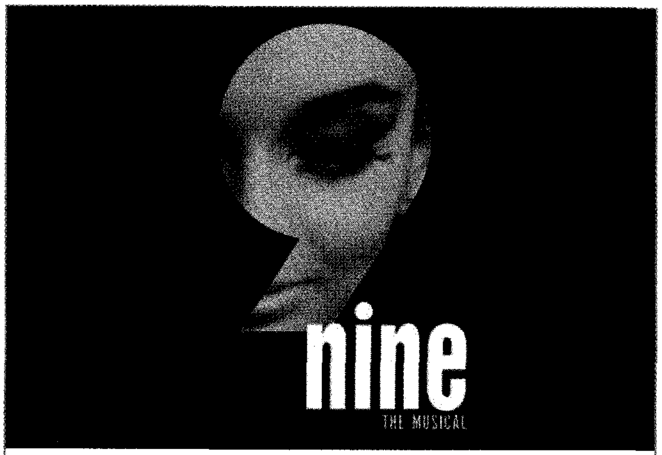

A DAY IN THE DEATH OF
JOE
EGG

## A Day in the Death of Joe Egg

Peter Nichols' black comedy about a bewildered couple struggling to raise their handicapped child returns to the Roundabout by way of London's West End. Directed by Olivier Award winner Laurence Boswell and starring Eddie Izzard, Victoria Hamilton, and Dana Ivey. Begins March 14th. **American Airlines Theatre, 227 West 42nd Street, 212-719-1300** or **www.roundabouttheatre.org**



## Nine

Enter a world where every femme is a fatale, where boyhood dreams run wild, and grown-up fantasies can come true. The Tony Award®-winning, Fellini-inspired musical returns to Broadway with Antonio Banderas, Laura Benanti, Jane Krakowski, Mary Stuart Masterson, and Broadway legend Chita Rivera. Begins March 11th. **Eugene O'Neill Theatre, 230 West 49th Street, 212-239-6200** or **www.telecharge.com**

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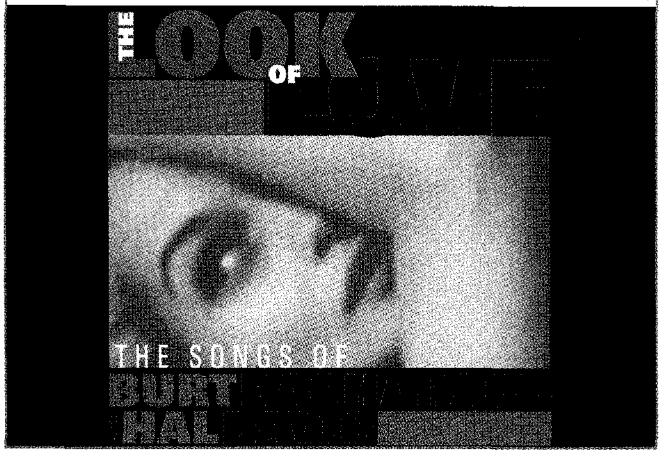
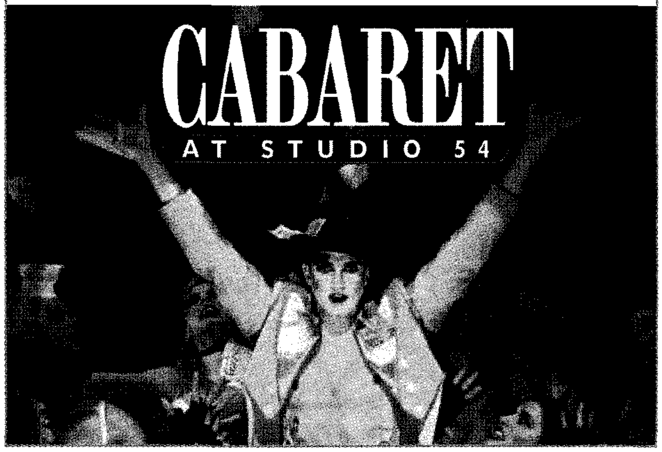
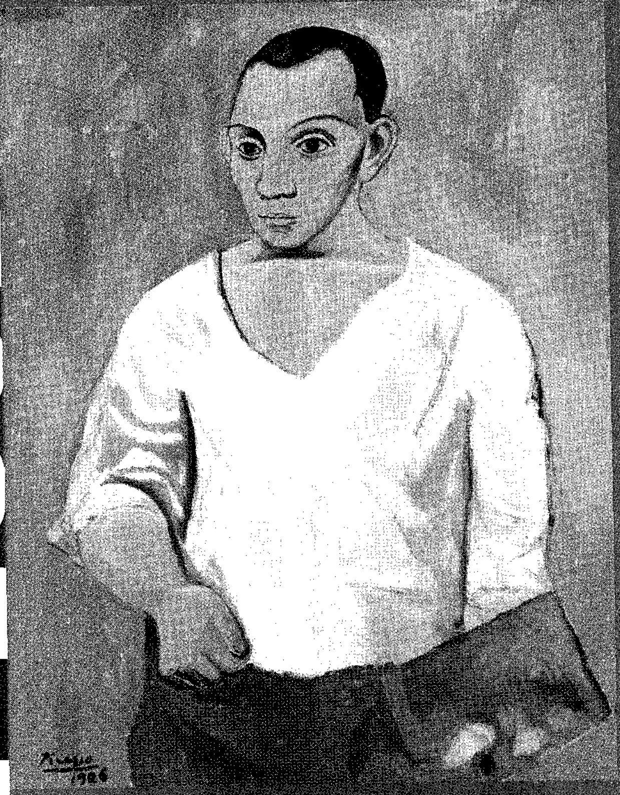


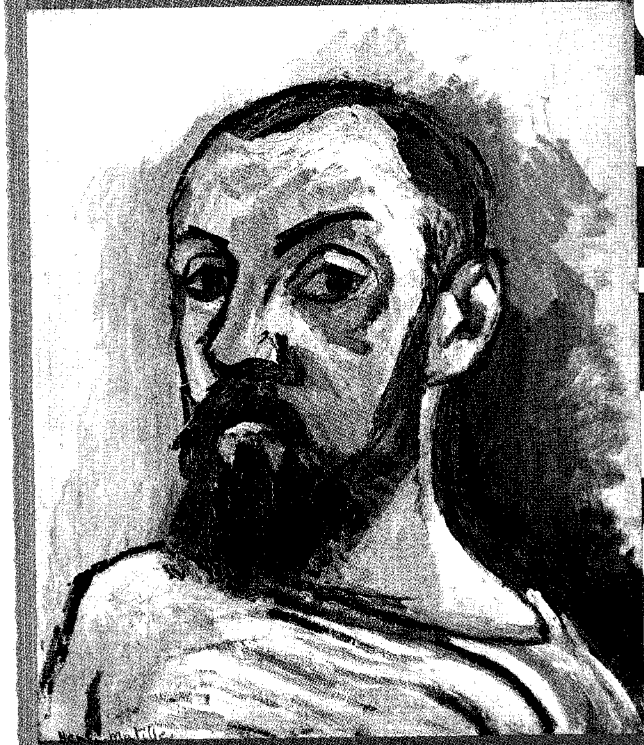
## Cabaret

In its fifth glorious year, Roundabout's Tony Award®-winning reinvention of "Cabaret" is "still the best musical on Broadway!" exclaims the *New York Post*. "Sensational . . . absolutely mesmerizing!" says *The New Yorker*. Co-directed by Sam Mendes and Rob Marshall. Now starring Neil Patrick Harris. **Studio 54, 254 West 54th Street, 212-239-6200** or **www.cabaret-54.com**



Roundabout Theatre Company





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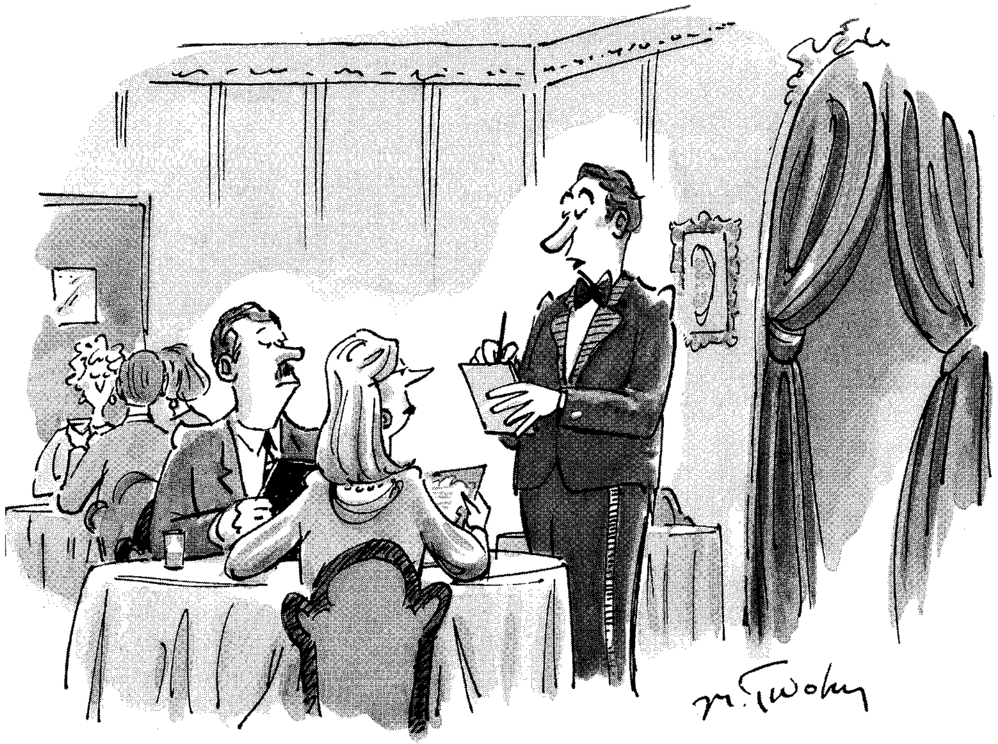
who first told about the roadside stand and their fraternal telepathy and the pulverized birdbaths, and to whom. I find the tale pleasing, because it suggests a repressed rage and a tasteful perversity of spirit that, however fatal these and associated qualities might have been in my uncle Bob, I am pleased to have in my lineage.

All things considered, it seems likely that Bob—or, I should say, Eldridge—never had optimum chances for survival. In addition to the difficulties imposed by an eccentric father and a patrician mother, he had to contend with his older brother, my father. In stories my mother told about him, my father as a young man comes off as an intimidatingly popular and accomplished student, clearly in the most-likely-to-succeed category, and much doted on by his mother, who, removed at last to Florida, had become the Sarasota High School Latin teacher, known to her students as Old Caesar. And, in fact, Eliza Antrim had in good measure the kind of sober reserve with which urbane people carry themselves when living in environments that are essentially colonial. The same could probably have been said for Julius Caesar, keeping order by the sword in the barbarous reaches of the Empire. But, unlike the historical Caesar's Imperial subjects, my grandmother's students eventually moved on in life, escaping her rule. Even my father, who, by becoming a professor, a professional intellectual, fulfilled in part her dreams for him, was able to marry, have children, and build a life separate from his mother. My uncle remained her vassal for life.

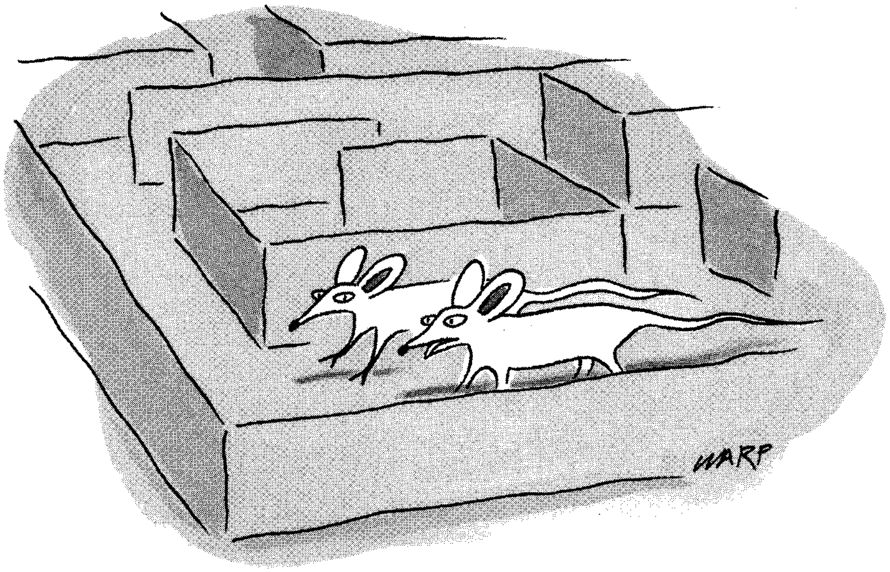
Here's some of what I know. In 1958, at the age of eighteen, Eldridge left home to study literature and art at the University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee. He painted and made drawings, but almost none of his work survives from this period, or from any other in his life. After college, he moved north to New York City, where he settled into an apartment in the East Seventies and enrolled in the Manufacturers Hanover Trust executive-training program. It is unlikely that he had plans to support himself as an artist by becoming a bank vice-president. Apparently, he accumulated debts, spent evenings in the bars along Second and Third Avenues, and either flunked or simply dropped out of the training program, though not before meeting, in his classes on retail and commercial banking, the love of his life. M. was—and is—a beautiful and intelligent woman who remained until recently a successful banker. The fact that my uncle became, subsequent to his rapid exit from corporate culture, a cabdriver and an Upper East Side doorman did not deter M., who undoubtedly saw, as people will when profoundly attached to lovers on their way to falling through the cracks, some version of him that would forever exist as Potential.

I remember M. from a trip my family took to New York when I was ten and my sister nine; and I remember my uncle in his apartment, a place I thought of frequently when I found myself living in New York, in my own small apartment only blocks away from the street where he'd lived twenty years before. The highlight of that trip was an afternoon at F. A. O. Schwarz, the world's greatest toy store, gift certificates—presents from Uncle Eldridge—clutched in our hands. I chose, after much exploring and considering (and perhaps in awareness that it was my uncle's dream to get his pilot's license and fly jumbo jets), one of those plastic planes driven by a loud, buzzing engine in circular flight around the "pilot." It was a cheap toy airplane destined to crash and break apart when, as soon as my father got it in the air (I never flew the thing), the handheld control lines became tangled and useless, causing the plane to jerk downward and nose-dive into the ground. Anyway, M. was very much on the scene at that time, and my sister and I pestered her and Eldridge mercilessly about their getting married—why weren't they *married*?—much as we would hound them about this in the years to come, even after our uncle had given up on New York and drifted down the coast, finally returning to Florida to live in his parents' house, in a tiny wood-panelled room crammed with guns and ammunition, British novels, all manner of sporting gear, antique toy soldiers on dusty shelves, a short and narrow bed with a tartan blanket, and, stacked within easy reach of the bed, back issues of the same kinds of magazines he kept in the trunk of his car—automobile, airplane, scuba, golf, tennis, rifle, archery, and porn.

It may have been the porn maga-



*"Regular service or affected?"*



*"Actually, I prefer crossword puzzles in the morning."*

• •

zines that attracted me, when I was a teen-ager in Miami, to my uncle's way of life. Everything about his way of life seemed desirable to me, because everything he did spoke to adolescent pleasures. He created the exquisite illusion that he was his own man, and free.

I was thirteen when I started riding the bus across the Everglades to visit him. I used to sit by the window and watch for alligators in the black canals beside the highway, as, in the far distance, fires lit by heat lightning burned off the dry grass and the stunted pines that grew in clusters like innumerable tiny islands rising from the shallow waters south of Naples. By this time, around 1972, my grandfather Robert Antrim had died, and my uncle had more or less abandoned any dreams he might have had for a life somewhere removed from his mother's house. My own mother's drinking had reached a level best described as operatically suicidal, and she and my father—married, divorced, remarried to each other—waged their war nightly. My sister had got busy saving herself through academics. I'd got busy flunking out. Our Siamese ate a poisonous South American toad and was afflicted with seizures that caused her to fall down and twitch violently. The other cat had reached the age at which vomiting was chronic.

And when in the deep of the night my mother came into my room swaying, half conscious and with gray smoke from her cigarette wreathing her face, shattered by bourbon and white wine; and when she raised her hand to strike, and I easily batted her arm back, then stepped forward and quickly steadied her before she tipped; when, holding my mother upright, I looked past her to see my father watching us from the shadows outside my room, whispering that he was sorry for everything—when these things happened, there eventually came a point at which feeling, or whatever it is we call feeling, broke apart in me. And though it is true that I felt rage and I felt shame and I felt fear—these emotions that I live with still, more than thirty years after my solitary pilgrimages to the playtime world of Uncle Bob—it was also true that I felt nothing at all. And in order to share this feeling that was not a feeling, in order to be with another person, a man, as I realize now, who was like the man I might one day become, a man drained of feeling, I boarded a bus.

The bus carried me past Frog City and the Miccosukee Indian settlements, all those alligator-wrestling parks and airboat-rental outposts. At Naples, the scenery changed, and the bus took a right turn and headed up the suburban Gulf Coast, stopping in Fort Myers, Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte, and other centerless non-towns I can't remember the names of, continuing north toward Venice, where the retired circus performers live, crossing one bridge after another and another, over narrow inlets and motorboats moored by the hundreds, before finally arriving, after what seems in memory an endless journey, in Sarasota, the town where I was born, and where my uncle, sunburned and smelling of English Leather and the beer he'd drunk the night before, waited to greet me at the station with the one question I have been trying to answer for myself ever since: "What do you want to do?"

We got in the car. We rolled down the windows. We turned on the radio. We began to drive. After a moment, I asked him the question I always looked forward to asking, upon seeing him for the first time in a long time.

"Eldridge, what are you eating?"

"Pork chops."

"How're you fixing them?"

"I'm broiling them."

"What are you having with them?"

"Spinach."

"What else?"

"Rice."

Or:

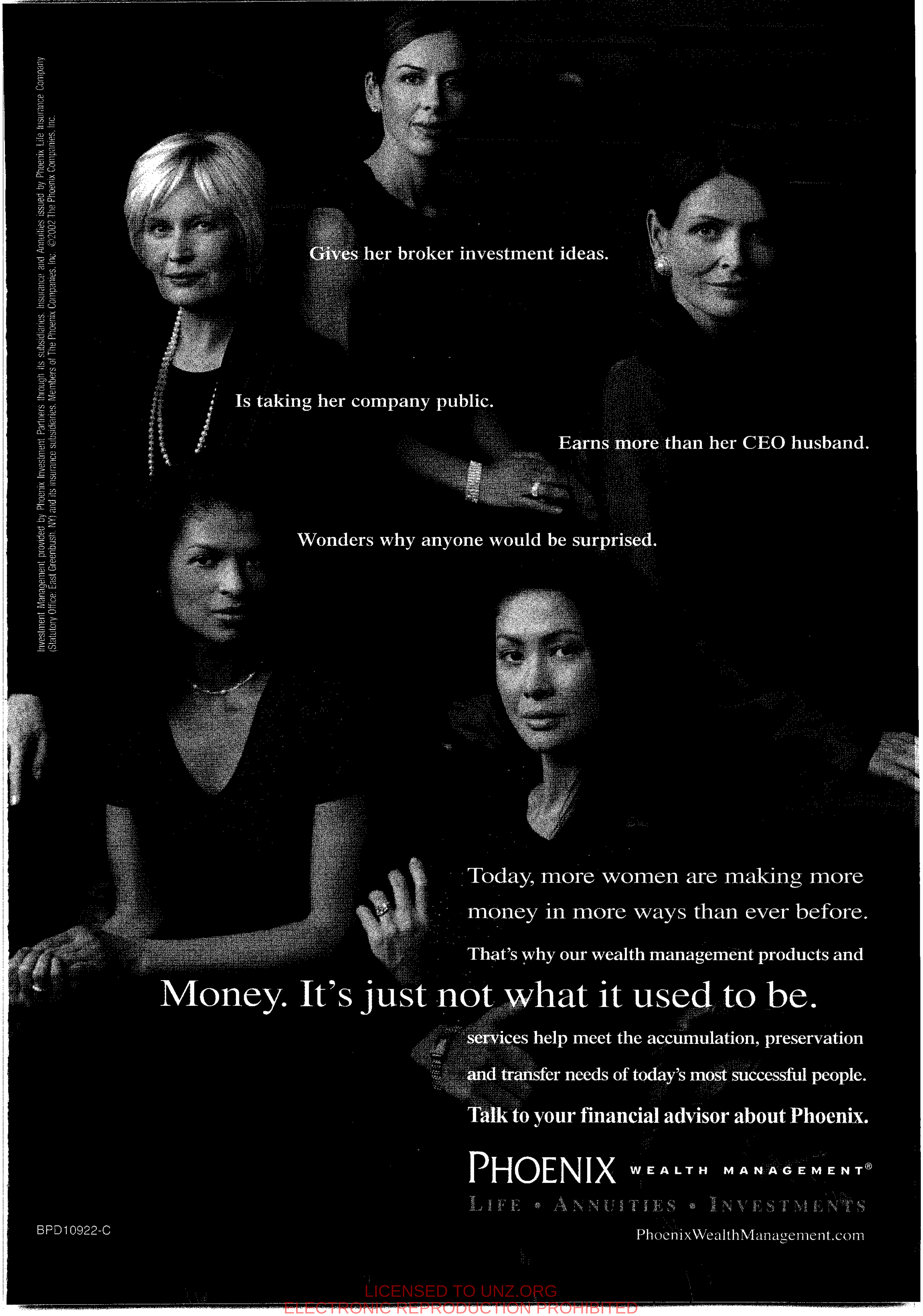
"String beans."

Or:

"Fries."

It worked out, he would explain—and my uncle was forced to explain this again and again, because people loved hearing it—that, over the course of a year, eating a menu that consisted of one entrée per month (scallops, spaghetti, pork chops, veal, flounder), he got a balanced diet.

It is easy, looking back on all this now, to appreciate the despair and the terror inherent in my uncle's preoccupations with self-sufficiency and preparedness, at home and in his car—particularly in the car, a four-door gas guzzler not unlike a rent-a-wreck version of the cars my mother's father drove, a car different in every respect from the one that had, at a certain moment in my uncle's youth, defined his enthusiasm for life, that car a sexy, cherry-red Triumph TR3 with a walnut steering wheel and a rusted-out hole in the passenger-side floor, a casualty of salt air and the Florida weather, which forced the passenger to position himself extremely carefully, especially since the Triumph's chassis rode quite low to the road. It is easy to make free with diagnostic interpretations of El-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dridge's pack-rat habits (habits that became disturbingly pronounced as he grew older and more isolated), but, for a brief period when I was in my early teens, I saw in these eccentricities nothing more than a droll and benign aptitude for contentment.

Each morning, Eldridge went to the carport and opened the trunk of the car. He stood before the items stowed there, moving and shifting his gear, replacing sweaty tennis clothes with clean, improving the over-all packing dynamics, while, inside the house, his white-haired mother, who often stayed up all night pacing, padded from bedroom to living room to porch to kitchen, worrying whether her son and grandson might eat a little breakfast before abandoning her for a day of horsing around and playing tennis and shooting pool with the friends from the Canada Dry loading dock out by the airport.

Once he'd established that everything was in order, that we had whatever we might need if, say, the world were to blow up and all life outside our car were to be catastrophically extinguished, we were off and running. Of what were our days together made? Looking back, I would say that our days were made of desire. We had structured activities, like tennis—I had not yet wrecked my shoulder with my high-toss, low-percentage, erratic yet explosive service, the theatrical serve of an enraged person—and less formal pastimes, like wandering into convenience stores for supplies, crossing one of the crowded bridges leading to Siesta Key and the beach, driving north and dropping in at Joel's house, stopping over afterward at Roger's. There always came that point in tennis when the black clouds appeared from the gulf, and the rain came down, and everyone bolted off the courts and drank water. Then, as suddenly, the sun would emerge, and we'd pick up mid-game, aiming to avoid puddles. Later we stared into the trunk.

The trunk, as I see it now, was a physical repository, a form of warehouse, or armory, in which my uncle secreted aspects of himself that would become, as the years went by, forbidden, denied, historical, forgotten. The things in the trunk were symbols of whatever in our lives—his and mine—might one day be taken away, totems representing sex and sport, music and work, eating and drinking, travel and intellectual pursuit, even talking and laughing. Together, my uncle and I stood in the parking lot with our hands in our pockets, staring at the pieces of the life we desired; and usually I would reach in and remove something, a silver-tipped arrow, for instance, or Eldridge's disassembled fishing rod in its case. I would hold and admire the object, then put it back in its place, after which Eldridge would close the trunk and we would walk around to the sides of the car, open the doors, and get in. Our conversations were perfect. Whenever I said to him, in language sometimes having to do with home, sometimes with school, that I no longer cared for living, he nodded and suggested that we drive out to Siesta Key and have a swim at the beach before the sun went down.

The last day I ever spent with him, we played doubles with Roger and Joel. From the courts we could see Sarasota Bay and, lit violet against the red sunset, the shell-shaped roof of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, known because of its paint job as the Purple Cow. After the game, my uncle and I walked to the car. As usual, we peered into, rummaged through, and slammed shut the trunk. Possibly I asked Eldridge about M. Had she been to visit? Was she coming? Did he love her? Did she love him? Would they ever get married? Why not? Then we drove to Joel's house, in a development near Bradenton. Immediately after we'd walked in the front door, the telephone rang. Joel's wife answered, put the phone down on a counter, and said, "Bob, it's your mother. She's been calling."

It happened frequently. Within a few hours of our leaving the house, his mother began dialling numbers for bars, restaurants, people's homes, whatever places he might be found in. She wanted to know when he planned to return to her. She wanted to know if he was drinking beer. She wanted to know if he would be out late. She wanted to know if he was telling her the truth. I could hear him speaking into the phone in Joel's kitchen, answering her: "Yes, Don's here. Yes, he's having a good time. No, I'm not letting him drink any beer. Yes, he's had something to eat. No, I'm not driving fast. No, we won't be out late." So it went. When we left Joel's and drove with Roger and Joel and Joel's wife in a caravan to shoot pool on the enormous pool table that happened to be the only item of furniture in Roger's living room—in Roger's entire house, as far as I could make out—the telephone rang and again I heard my uncle speaking to my grandmother: "Yes, we're playing pool. No, we're not betting any money. Don't worry, I won't let him drink any beer. Yes, we'll be home soon."

It was around this time that I was learning, in imitation of my uncle's adult friends, to call Eldridge Bob.

"Bob, what are we eating?" I asked him when, later that night, after tennis and billiards, after we'd driven out Fruitville Road to the house, parked in the carport, and checked the trunk one last time, we left the world of the car and entered the realm of Eldridge and his mother. The stove lights were on in the kitchen. On the other side of the house my grandmother moved about. I could see her in the shadows. She was a pale wraith in her blue housedress in her dark bedroom, behind sliding glass doors that opened through curtains onto the porch, where I slept on a sofabed.

"Pork chops."

"What are we having with them?"

"Fries."

"All right. Is it time for Johnny Carson?"

"Just about."

"Should I turn on the TV?"

"Turn it on," he said. He was cooking, using the broiler and a fork. I sat in his room, where the TV was, staring at *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. My uncle, I remember, always had in his room a certain game for one player, a Labyrinth, basically a wooden box fitted with a pivoting top, on which was fashioned a kind of maze through which the player ma-

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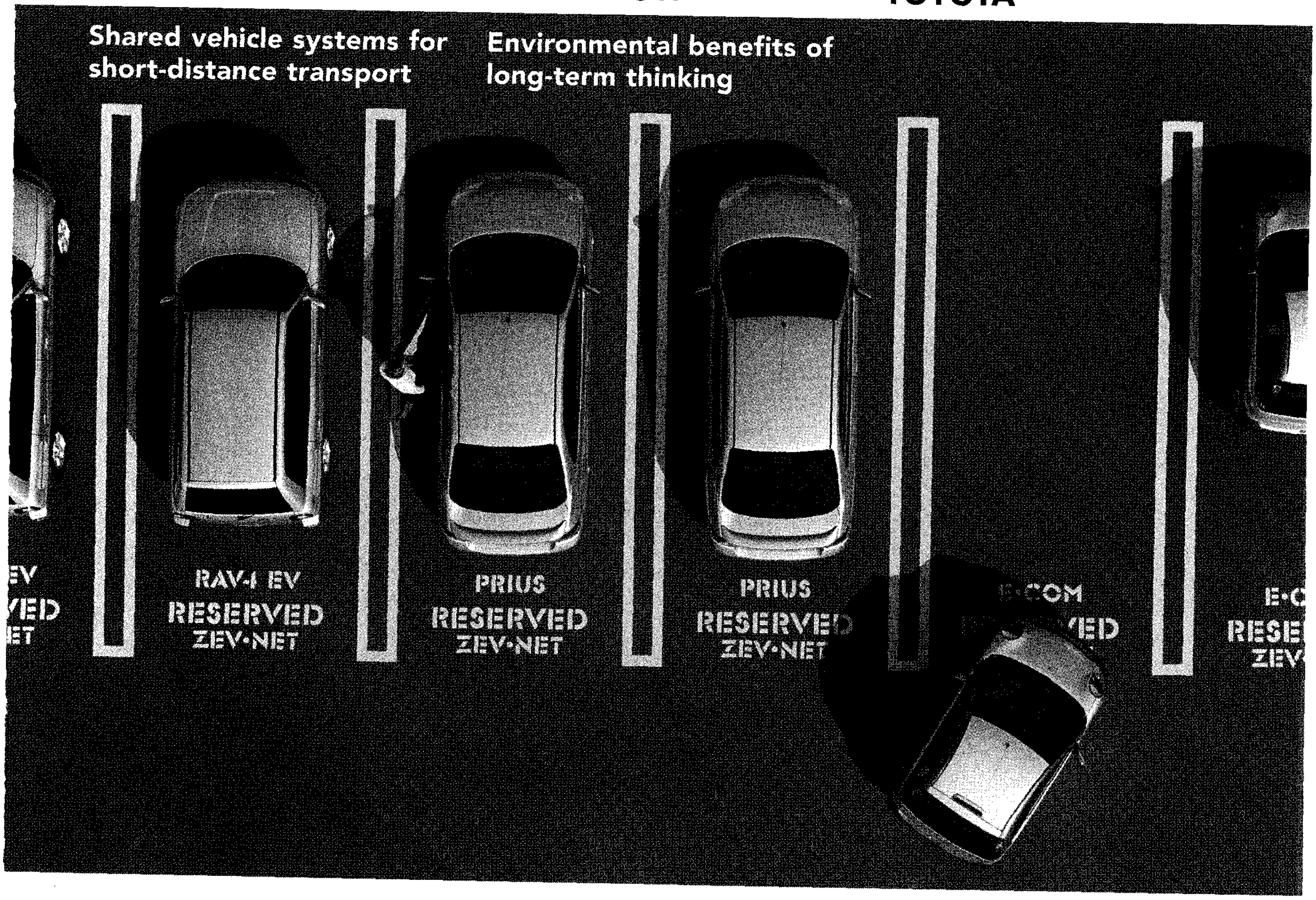
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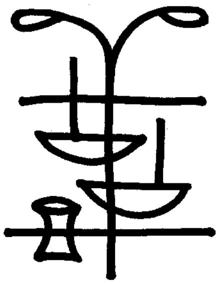
neuvered a steel ball. My uncle could turn the knobs and guide the ball safely through. I drank a soda and played the game for a while, and my uncle opened another beer for himself. I was accustomed to people drinking into the night, and saw nothing remarkable in my uncle's drinking.

Eldridge was a tall and beautiful-looking man. He tanned in the sun to a reddish shade characteristic among people of Scottish descent. His forehead had a scar from the time he'd walked straight into a forklift blade. His beer gut did not detract from his appeal. Sometimes he wore a gold chain. He looked as if he'd be right at home at the Playboy Mansion pool parties pictured in the magazines beside the bed. Had I known him as a peer—had I been an adult in his circle in New York in the years when he was dating M. and making his brief escape from home and his mother—I might have been able to better understand (and see through?) the qualities of personality that made Eldridge Antrim so charming and seductive. As it was, I was a boy, and I was seduced.



Carson came on the television. We ate with our plates balanced on our laps. My uncle blanketed his pork chops beneath a layer of pepper. I did the same. The pork chops were dry and hard, and the pepper bounced off them. The television reception was fuzzy, and the antenna had to be adjusted constantly. I was aware that I wanted to be like my uncle, aware as well that I wanted to be nothing like him. I complained to him about my father, who had begun to worry absurdly over my prospects, if I kept going the way I was going, for graduate school. Sometimes, when I complained, Bob taunted me for not having the courage to drop out of school altogether. I must have felt, somehow, that my uncle and his brother had, throughout their lives, been at odds with each other. Bob and I watched Carson host guest after guest. In my memory, this was the night that Steve Martin came on and closed the show with a cheap prop arrow sticking through his head. Or was it the night that Martin came out and did the half-a-beard routine?

I put my plate down, got up, and walked through the open glass doors to the sunporch. I heard Bob in his room, undressing. After a moment he came out and stood beside my sofabed. He was wearing boxer shorts and a T-shirt, and he was making fun of me, but the joking had now passed the point at which it was pleasurable, because he had drunk himself into a state of visible inebriation. I was standing beside the bed. He was standing beside me. He pushed me gently, and suddenly we were falling. We were wrestling on the bed. He climbed on top of me, and I squirmed beneath him. I was on my stomach and my uncle was on my back. He had my arms pinned. His movements were sluggish. We were wrestling, and then we were no longer wrestling. He forced me to stay still and be quiet. I could smell the salty, burned scent of his skin; and I could smell the warm beer on his breath as he exhaled against the side of my face. He stopped moving, and I stopped moving.

He breathed.

I breathed.

He was spread across me. His chest pressed me down into the bed. His face was next to mine.

How long did we stay like that, breathing together on the folded-out sofa? The moment did not last long. The time that elapsed was the time it took for our relationship to end. Had he passed out? Was he waiting for me to speak? Was it safe to move? I felt the dead weight of him on me, and my feelings about him, and about his way of life, changed. I perceived that this man on top of me was a drunk in his underwear, a man who ate the same food night after night in a room in his mother's house, and I was terrified.

"Get up," I told him. He lifted himself. He got off me. I watched him rise and walk unsteadily in bare feet to his room. The lights in his room went dark. I heard the springs squeaking inside his little bed; and I thought I saw, in the hours before I fell asleep, his mother, my grandmother, pacing behind the curtains drawn behind the glass doors leading to her room at the far end of the house. There had been a time, when I was little, that I had slept in her bed with her. But the far end of the house seemed to me, that night, after Eldridge had gone to bed, like a truly faraway place.

The next morning I told my uncle I had to leave Sarasota. I didn't say why, and I don't know whether he, in some way, understood. I just told him I had to go. He drove me to the station. He put me on a bus, and I rode the bus down the Tamiami Trail, stopping at the towns along the way, travelling south past Naples, southeast across the Everglades. After a long ride I saw, through the bus windows on the right, the enormous cement factory that, in those days, marked the end of the journey home.

When I was sixteen, I left Miami for boarding school in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Two years after that, I went north to college, and four years later I moved to New York, where I still live. During these years I saw my uncle only a couple of times. My mother, in the decade after she got sober, in 1983, made an effort to stay in touch with him. At some point, he and my grandmother moved from their house to a small apartment. It was in this apartment that Eliza died, and he was left alone. For years, he worked as a prep cook in a restaurant on Siesta Key. He used to go in late, after the restaurant had closed, and work until dawn, preparing and organizing food for the cooks who came in mornings to make lunch. My uncle liked this routine, because it protected him from ever having to see or talk to another person. He told my mother that he didn't think he could go to A.A. and stop drinking, because he was afraid that his anger might cause him to harm someone.

At the age of fifty-two, he died. My mother told me later that his weight had dropped precipitously, that he'd turned yellow, that, at the end, he'd bled through his skin. And she told me a story about the last year of his life, a story about a woman no one in our family had known a thing about.

Back when he was a boy, back in that ancient time when Robert Antrim was driving over birdbaths and urns, Eldridge had known a girl who lived on a farm that neighbored his mother's brother Tom's property on the James River, near Amherst. My uncle and this girl had ridden horses together. The girl fell in love with Eldridge, and she never forgot him. Like Eldridge, she grew up to live a difficult life in which she became an alcoholic and found herself alone in the world. In the year before he died, she somehow tracked him down. She came to Sarasota to be with him for whatever time they had left. She tried to get him to eat, and she measured out what he could drink. She was dying herself, of a brain tumor. She was there—ensconced in the apartment my uncle had shared with his mother—when, in 1992, my mother drove to Sarasota to say goodbye to her ex-husband's brother, whom she liked to refer to, in the spirit of the old days, as Sam. The story goes that, at the moment Sam died, this woman none of us knew, who was alone in the apartment, saw—so she later reported to my mother, an ideal audience—bloody footprints walk across the living-room floor. I never know what to make of these kinds of stories, or of the people who tell them. My mother in the last decade of her life was a great defender of the reality of supernatural epiphenomena, and of the certain existence of the dead among the living. The truth of the matter is that I neither believe nor wholly discount the tale of the bloody footprints, in part because I think Eldridge should be allowed a memorable parting gesture, a gesture of—what? Loneliness? The woman from Virginia became the custodian of his ashes, which she carried home to Amherst with her. Shortly after that, she, too, died.

After his brother's death, my father drove up the Tamiami Trail to Sarasota and cleared out the apartment. There was no funeral. I asked my father what had become of Eldridge's rifles and his records, his scuba and golf and tennis gear, and he told me that these things had been replaced by high-calibre handguns and case after unopened case of small-arms ammunition, which he, my father, had dug out of the bedroom closet and hauled back to the gun shop.

And that was pretty much it for Uncle Bob, a.k.a. Eldridge, a.k.a. Sam, who saved my life by becoming, for a brief time when I was a boy, my companion and my hero, and who saved it again by destroying the last traces of a home for me at exactly the moment when it was time to leave. ♦

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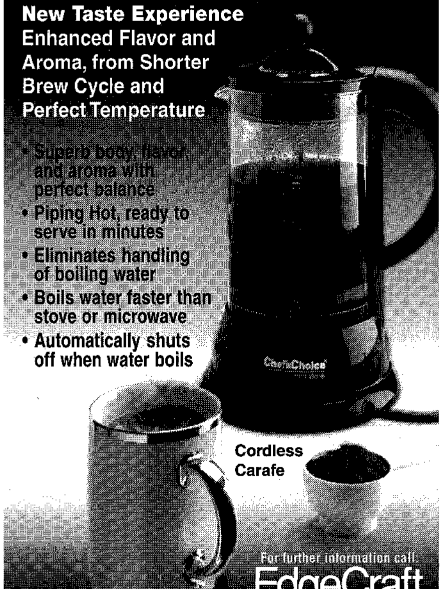

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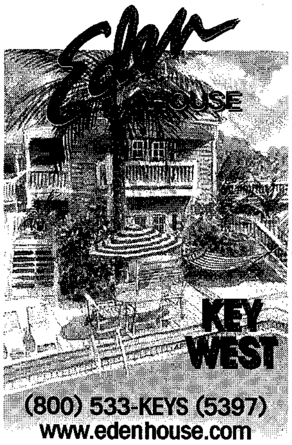

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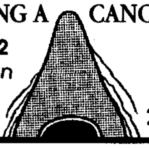


THE SPORTING SCENE

# BACK TO THE BASEMENT

*Ping-Pong: It's a whole new ball game.*

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

I loved the house I grew up in, a big mock-Tudor, built in the twenties, with stained-glass windows and an old-time solidity, but I was afraid of the basement. It had two rooms where, for all eighteen years that my parents owned the house, I thought I might die. One was a storage room, with a raw rock outcropping that extended back farther than the light in the room allowed you to see. I thought that the black space above the rock went on more or less forever, and I was always expecting a man to emerge from it and kill me. The other was the small, hot room where the furnace was; there was a blood-red switchplate with a printed warning on it telling you not to turn the switch off, and, hanging next to the furnace, a large glass container full of red liquid, whose function I never knew. I was sure that if I touched it or the light switch the house would explode. And then, if I didn't actually die, I would be in a lot of trouble. Beyond those two rooms, down a hallway and two steps, there was what we called the playroom. There wasn't much in there—nothing good that might get ruined, and not much to play with, either—but there was a Ping-Pong table, which for me was, if not quite a reason for being, at least a reason for risking a trip to the basement. In this room, *I* was the killer.

My father had made the Ping-Pong table himself: it consisted of two pieces of plywood hinged in the middle and stained dark green, with a white painted center line, laid over a brown wool blanket on an old dining-room table from the Philippines, where my parents had lived when they were first married. It was the only piece of furniture in the room, except for an ugly blue couch in a corner, which sometimes had to be pulled scrapingly across the linoleum floor in order for you to get at an inevitably errant Ping-Pong ball. At some point, we got a pool table, adding another obstacle under or around which you had to go to fetch the ball.

I had one friend who liked to play almost as much as I did, but mainly I played with my father, starting when I was about six. He was a very good tennis player, and a very good Ping-Pong player, and he didn't tone down his game for me. I really wanted to beat him, and I knew that one day I would. Because I was good, too. I was really good. I had excellent hand-eye coördination and timing—I knew when and how to put spin on the ball, dump a short ball just over the net, or put it away with a slam. I loved everything about the game: the rhythmic pock-*pock*, pock-*pock* of the ball hitting the table and racquet again and again, the hummy all-over pleasure I got when I hit a ball well, the back-and-forth conversational aspect of it. I was always in the mood to play. Dick Miles, a ten-time United States champion in the nineteen-forties, fifties, and sixties, wrote in one of his instructional books, "Table tennis is, for me, one of those world-blotting-out activities, the ultimate escape." It was a little like that for me, too. I was completely at home with a racquet in my hand; I played without any tentativeness or self-consciousness, which made the game different from everything else in my life. My father, who had a military bent and was not a big proponent of self-assertion in his children, nevertheless allowed me my insistence on my own existence when it came to Ping-Pong—my killer instinct, my agonized howls after missing a big shot—and he would laugh appreciatively when I went all-out and hit a winning slam. He had his little jokes, which became my little jokes. If either of us had the other person at zero and the other person got a point, we'd say, "There goes my love game," as if we'd been sure we had a shutout going. Each time we finished playing, my father would pretend to be a boxing announcer and declare himself "the winner and still champeen!" And for quite a few years, until I was twelve or thirteen, and good enough to beat him at the game he'd taught me, he was.

After I left home and went to college, I stopped playing, except once or twice a year at my parents'. They'd sold our house, in a suburb of New York City, and bought a place in Massachusetts. The green plywood, the wool blanket, and the dining-room table are set up there now, in an uninviting storage room that has an off-putting number of places for a ball to hide after a missed shot. I always beat my father when we play these days, but perhaps I should add that he is now eighty-two. Once, after I moved to New York, in 1979, I played in the Ping-Pong parlor on Broadway and Ninety-sixth Street, which was owned by the legendary player Marty Reisman. It was just a few blocks from my apartment, but the place closed a year later, to make way for a never-to-be-legendary high-rise. Not playing much Ping-Pong for all those years cemented my belief that I was a good player—not to mention the fact that I'd gone out on a high note, having won my high-school championship in my senior year. I only had to beat two people to do it, but still.

Here's the thing, though: I really wasn't very good. I was . . . *O.K.* . . . *sort of.* Other amateur athletes dream of being better than they are, but a peculiar trait of basement Ping-Pong players is that they *think* they're better than they are. They're not. The expert and the amateur "play different games," Dick Miles writes in "The Game of Table Tennis." "The expert plays table tennis as a sport; the basement player is, for the most part, piddling at ping pong." In his book "The Money Player," Reisman, a three-time U.S. singles champion and the winner of some twenty national and international titles, tells of a middle-aged man who challenged him one day when he was a young, topflight player. Reisman beat him 21–0 three games in a row, but the man didn't get the message. "'With a little practice,' he said, 'I think I could beat you.'" People who play baseball, soccer, golf, tennis, basketball, or football have plenty of opportunities to get an idea of the size and nature of the gap that separates them from the pros. But Ping-Pong isn't televised much in this country, and most of the spectators at tournaments are other tournament players. Also, the modest scale of the game—a nine-by-five table, a six-inch-high net, a little plastic ball, and a wooden racquet that is barely bigger than a hand span—makes it look so easy.

*Jake Carter, aged twelve, played at the national table-tennis championships in Las Vegas. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.*

And then there is the name, which is hard to take seriously. "Ping-Pong" was coined a little more than a century ago by an English sporting-goods firm, which sold the American rights to the name to Parker Brothers in 1901, during a craze for the game that lasted about four years. When the game became popular again, in the nineteen-twenties, other manufacturers had to use the generic term "table tennis," and that is the term the professionals use; the governing body for the sport in this country is called U.S.A. Table Tennis. But the name Ping-Pong persists.

Kids—even kids who eventually become champions—discover and take to Ping-Pong by accident. Dick Miles, who had asked for a pool table for his eleventh birthday, was given a "tea-table

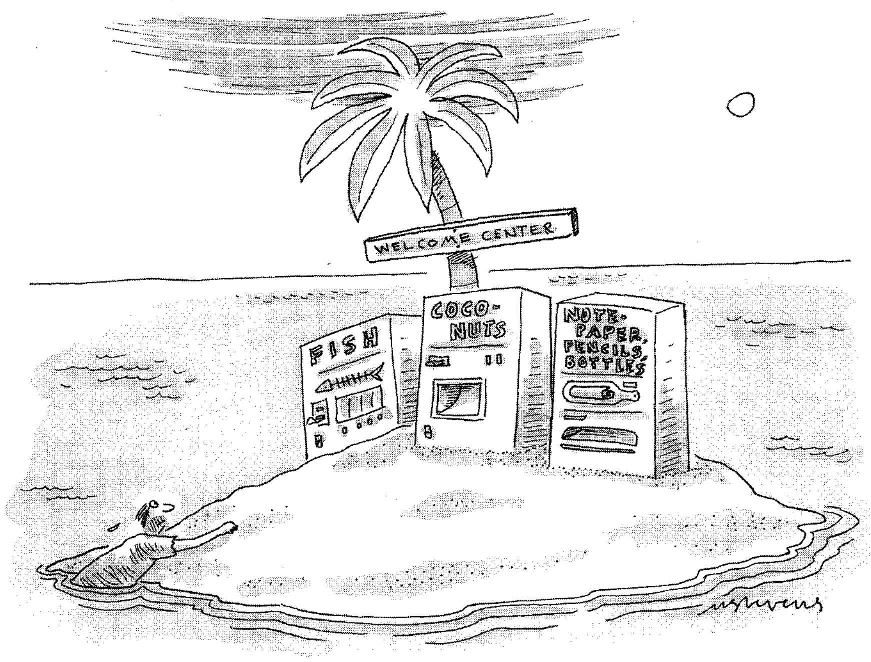
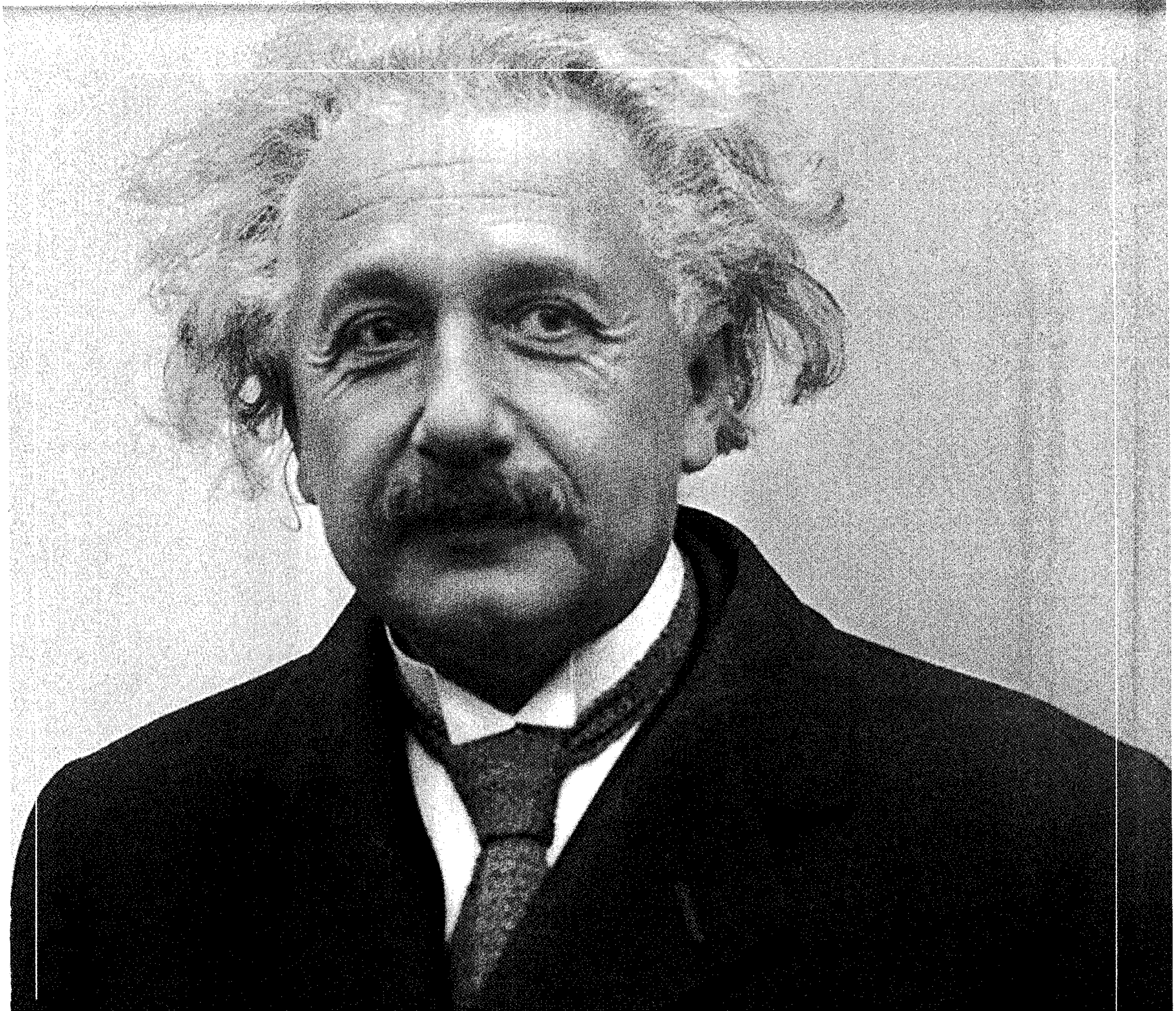


table-tennis" set instead. Marty Reisman began playing at eleven, because his older brother did. Ruth Aarons, who in 1936, at the age of seventeen, became the only American player ever to win a world singles championship, discovered the game at fourteen in a hotel basement. (For some of this table-tennis lore, I have relied on the invaluable writings of Tim Boggan, the sport's premier historian.) Even these players didn't realize what they were up against until they happened upon a club where top players gathered. Miles and Reisman became world-class players by going to a club known as Lawrence's, on Broadway between Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Streets, where the great players of the day congregated. City players have an advantage in this respect: they didn't grow up with Ping-Pong tables in their basement and take the game for granted; they had to make a journey of discovery for themselves. At one time, there were a handful of active world-class players who were born and brought up in New York City. (Four of them are still living here: Reisman and Miles, and Sol Schiff and Lou Pagliaro, who were two of the greats of the thirties and forties.) Even though table tennis is the No. 2 sport in the world, after soccer, it is all but invisible in this country. (There are no "Ping-Pong moms" whose vote anyone is trying to get.) A brief flurry of interest in the game in 1971, at the time of "Ping-Pong diplomacy," when an American delegation of players was invited to China, was just that. None of the sport's players have ever been household names, and the only journey that most Americans make when it comes to Ping-Pong is to their basement, to a table that is generally coated with dust and marked with sticky rings where the kids put their sodas while they're playing air hockey.

During the years when I didn't play much, I still thought of Ping-Pong as something I played, not as something I used to play, and I kept waiting for a table to fall into my life. I was flabbergasted when my company moved, four years ago, into a brand-new building that had amenities like a multimillion-dollar cafeteria and lights that go out while you're working unless you flail your arms around (internal, psychic flailing won't do it) but didn't have even one Ping-Pong table. Similarly, what helped me endure a year and a half of noise and dust while a new Jewish community center was being built down the street from my apartment was the thought that at least they'd have a Ping-Pong table there. But they didn't! (So much for the would-be Reismans, Schiffs, Mileses, and Aaronses of the future.) Ping-Pong didn't come knocking at my door again until a little more than a year ago. That's when I first got a true idea of my place in the Ping-Pong pantheon—or, to be more accurate, my distance from the Ping-Pong pantheon, which is something like the distance from Earth to Alpha Centauri.

In December of 2001, the editor and writer Harold Evans invited me along to a publication party for a new book about Ping-Pong, by Jerome Charyn, called "Sizzling Chops & Devilish Spins." Harry was known to be a good player and a fan—he competed in the 1948 English Open, and he had edited a 1959 book by the English player Ken Stanley called "Table Tennis: A New Approach." The party was held at a table-tennis club I hadn't known about, on Broadway between Ninety-ninth and a Hundredth Streets, called the Manhattan Table Tennis Club. Founded in 1999 by a Polish-born businessman named Jerry Wartski, who plays there regularly, it is the only Ping-Pong club in Manhattan, which years ago used to have half a dozen such places on the stretch of Broadway between midtown and Ninety-sixth Street alone. It's a third-floor hole in the wall, dingy and welcoming in a pre-gentrification sort of way, and its windows have been painted over to keep the light, and the world, out. (It is managed by Atanda Musa, a former Nigerian champion, who is the best African player in the history of the game.) At the party, Harry was to play some games with Marty Reisman, whom I'd never met or seen play, though his photograph was a fixture in the Chinese restaurants in the neighborhood. The two men, both in their seventies (Reisman turned seventy-three this month), went at it with a skill and an intensity that were delightful to see. Reisman was dazzling. He wore a panama hat, as he always does, and he didn't break a sweat. Sure, he missed some shots—everybody does—but the core of his game was still there: the devastating fast forehand, which had been his signature shot, and which had helped make him, at one point, one of the top five players in the world, and his chess-master-like ability to control the game. (Reisman's accuracy is such that with his deadly forehand he can—famously—snap in two a cigarette standing on end on the far side of the table.)

Harry arranged to play with Marty on a regular basis, and I got in on the act, too. Reisman had been given playing privileges at a sports club in midtown for a



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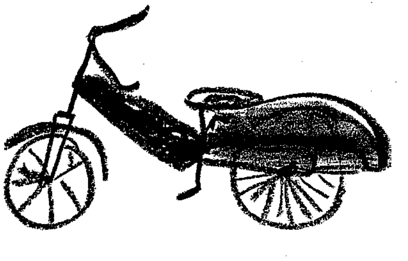
few months, and, during that time, I was lucky enough to be coached by him once or twice a week. I was several decades out of practice, but after I'd hit the ball back and forth just a few times Reisman could see that rustiness wasn't really the problem. I had been doing everything wrong my whole life: I had basically been playing tennis on a smaller scale. I held the racquet too low on the handle, and I tended to hit with too much of a sideways spin. (Proper strokes in table tennis combine an up-and-down motion with forward motion; these motions, and the angle of the racquet face as it comes into contact with the ball, determine its speed and spin.) I also didn't move unless I had to—when you're young, you think that a shot you can reach for and get without moving is, by definition, a good shot. So I had to learn—and constantly try to remember—to stay on the balls of my feet and be ready to move, and then actually *move*, and then get ready for the next shot.

Because I still had a vestigial feel for the sport, and because Reisman is a terrific teacher, I made rapid progress on a couple of aspects of my game. I had lost some things—I used to have a decent backhand slam, and I remember being good at hitting down the line on both sides of the table when my opponent (Dad) was expecting a cross-court shot—but I quickly gained a couple of shots I had never had, such as a backhand chop, which is a defensive shot with backspin, and a forehand drive. With these tools, I could *surely* have won my high-school championship a year sooner, instead of losing to Elaine Lang.

By playing with Reisman, I had, in addition to getting a far greater teacher than I deserved, walked into a fifty-year-old argument. Reisman plays with the kind of racquet called a hardbat, whose covering is a thin layer of pimpled rubber. This used to be the standard racquet for pros and basement players alike, though pros had access to higher-quality equipment than you'd find in a sporting-goods store or at Sears—better-balanced racquets, better rubber. It's what I had always used, too, and I stuck with it because that's the way I am; I still have my forty-year-old paddles, even though the rubber on them is now so hard that they're unusable. I had noticed over the years that I'd stopped seeing this kind of paddle at people's houses and in stores, and that it had been replaced by racquets with a smooth rubber covering and no pimples. I didn't like the new racquets, mainly because I couldn't feel the ball as well when I hit it, and I missed the sound of the ball's resonant smack against the racquet. The new racquets, instead of saying *pock* when they hit the ball, gave off a muted, indefinite *pah*—the difference was comparable to the difference between the sound of a manual typewriter and the sound of a computer keyboard.

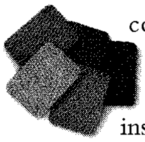
This new kind of rubber—it will always seem new to me, though it has been in use since the early fifties—completely changed the game of table tennis, and it has been Reisman's bête noir since it was first introduced. Reisman, the winner of the English Open in 1949—then the most prestigious title next to that of world champion—was poised to win the world championship a few years later, in 1952. It was, he thought, his year. But, in an early round, he faced an unknown Japanese player named Hiroji Satoh, whose racquet was covered with this strange new rubber—three-quarters of an inch of foam—which no one had ever seen. Reisman writes in "The Money Player," "Outfielders in baseball often can judge the flight of a ball from the crack it makes as it comes off the bat. So too can table tennis players judge the velocity of a ball by the noise it makes when it is struck by the opponent's racket. . . . But against Satoh there was no sound." Because of the catapult-like quality of his equipment, Satoh, who wasn't even one of the best players on the Japanese team, was able to use Reisman's own attacking-style game against him. Reisman's shots "sank into the foam rubber of Satoh's racket and were flung back at me with amazing force. . . . I was throwing lethal punches and hitting myself in the face." Reisman had shown up with a bow and arrow, and his opponent came armed with an automatic rifle—and it won him the world title.

Americans were slow to switch to the new paddle, called a sponge racquet, and their world stature, which was already on the way down by the early fifties, suffered further because of it. The new surface took over everywhere, and eventually it became standard here, too. Reisman's beef with the sponge game is not merely that it robbed him of a world championship, though that would be reason enough to hate it—he believes that it is a lesser game, and that it rewards lesser players. Where the game once had drama, it now had mere excitement—a generalized, impersonal excitement that extinguished the game's formerly inherent gladiatorial sense of struggle, its me-against-you-ness. Now it was my racquet against your racquet. (Reisman won the U.S. Open in 1960 with a sponge racquet, but playing with it gave him no satisfaction; he put it down and never played with it again.) There are still people who play with the hardbat, but it is a niche game, which had all but disappeared from serious competition until a sidebar tournament was instated in the National Championships, six years ago.



The National Championships are held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, and it is an indicator of the sport's marginality and semi-geekiness that the four-day tournament takes place just a few days before Christmas, when so-called normal people are busy at home with real life—holiday preparations, families, parties, shopping, seasonal affective disorder. I didn't see any publicity for the tournament around town, even at the hotel where the players—some seven hundred of them—were staying, and at the tournament itself it was hard to figure out who was playing when and where in the huge hall, which held ninety tables. The U.S.A.T.T. has something of a basement-player mentality: When I asked the tournament director for a printout of the day's matches, he told me that the file was in his computer at home. And the association's slogan—"Putting a New Spin on an Old Favorite!"—sounds like something your all-too-helpful aunt cooked up.

This was an interesting year to go to the Nationals, because it was the first time that an important new rule, instituted by the International Table Tennis Federation, the sport's ultimate governing body, was in effect. Players were now forbidden to block their opponents' view



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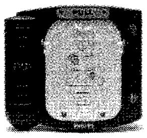

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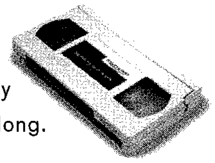

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## SNAKE EYES

The afternoon clouds are like a Xerox of the morning clouds,
An indecipherable transcript,
ill-litanied, ill-limned.

There is no consolation, it seems, there's only light.
Right there, beyond our dark spot.

Imagination is merely the door.
All we can do is knock hard
And hope that something will open it.

Around the corners of the known world,
blue stanzas link
The lines of the first great poem, there is no second.

Idleness anchors us.
Nothing accomplished, nothing retrieved,
We're posed like water striders above the secondhand stars.

We have a taste for the untastable,
the radiant root of things,
The unimaginary part of what is unimaginable.

We wait between goodbye and hello,
an ounce of absence, an ounce of regret,
Standing on one foot, whistling a half-remembered tune.

Mystical twos and mojo, God sockets,
clouds roll across the sky,
Letting the light come down on some, taking it back from others.

—*Charles Wright*

---

of their serve and thereby prevent them from judging the degree and direction of spin. The I.T.T.F. had made a couple of other big changes in recent years, in an effort to make the sport more spectator-friendly. The game was now played to eleven points, not twenty-one, and each player served just twice, instead of five times, in a row. The ball, which had been thirty-eight millimetres in diameter for decades, had been enlarged to forty. The idea was that the eleven-point game would keep matches moving apace; at the same time, the bigger ball would slow down individual points, and be easier to see on television; and the service rule would eliminate the deception that had caused tournament play to follow a monotonous pattern: confusing serve, confused return, *slam*. The new rules have had mixed results. Players try to appear to be adhering to the service rule while coming as close to flouting it as they possibly can. The ball *is* easier to see, although, from all reports, its meliorative effects have been negligible. (I find it floaty and elusive, like a balloon in the wind.) The eleven-point game, however, has unquestionably sapped the sport of something essential. Games have a beginning and an end, but no middle—there's no wiggle room for players, and no dramatic traction for spectators.

The I.T.T.F. has never set any meaningful standards for racquet coverings; a player can have two completely different surfaces on his racquet, of different thicknesses and different rubber. While the hard rubber that Reisman uses can last for years, sponge rubber has to be replaced every few months, if not more frequently. There are hundreds of types of rubber, and hundreds of blades—the wooden racquet, without the rubber—to choose from. And then there is the added wrinkle of "speed glue," which has become almost a fetish among players. Top players remove the rubber from their racquet and reglue it each time they play. The glue—don't ask me how—makes the ball carom off the racquet with even more speed and spin. The manufacturers of all this stuff—and rubbers and blades are not cheap—pretty much rule the sport; they are virtually the only advertisers in the U.S.A.T.T.'s magazine, and one of them sponsored the Nationals. (I don't know how hard the U.S.A.T.T. tries to get other corporate sponsorship of its activities. George Brathwaite, a U.S.A.T.T. vice-president—and a many-titled player, who has long been involved in trying to raise the sport's profile—told me he'd heard that Bill Gates had regularly attended the table-tennis events at the Sydney Olympics. Yet the association hadn't thought about approaching Gates to help develop the sport or to sponsor tournaments. The championship purse at the Nationals was pathetic: two thousand dollars for the men's singles winner, and—did somebody say "sexism"?—fifteen hundred dollars for the women's. By the way, I have read that there are tables—tables, plural—at Microsoft.)

Still, it was possible to put aside these concerns about the sport and get good and drunk on table tennis at the Nationals. Matches were being played as far as the eye could see, and even farther than that, and there were competitors of every shape and size and age and level. One of the first matches I happened to notice was between a plump Chinese boy and an old bald white guy. There was a competition for players in wheelchairs, and a competition for disabled ambulatory players. (To play in the Nationals, you have to be an American citizen. Most of the players and the spectators—who were largely the family members and coaches of the players—were either of Asian birth or of Asian parentage. Four of the top six seeds in the women's singles competition were born in China, and the future of the sport appears to reside in young Asian-Americans, who have table-tennis culture in their blood; the four teen-age girls featured as "top youth players" in the tournament program were named Jackie Lee, Whitney Ping,

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Michelle Do, and Katherine Wu.) You could get close to the play, and sometimes, when the ball was mis-hit and came your way over the thigh-high barriers surrounding each playing area, you'd get to throw it back to the players, which was totally cool. One of the funny things about table tennis is that, no matter how big you get, you still have to chase after the ball. There are no ball boys or girls kneeling in wait. (Steve Berger, a teacher and a player I met in Las Vegas, told me that players don't mind; the interval gives them a chance to think about their next shot.) There is one big difference between basement and élite players, though. They may both say "Come *on!*" out loud to themselves after a missed shot, but being a tournament player means never having to say "Sorry!" or "Whoops!"

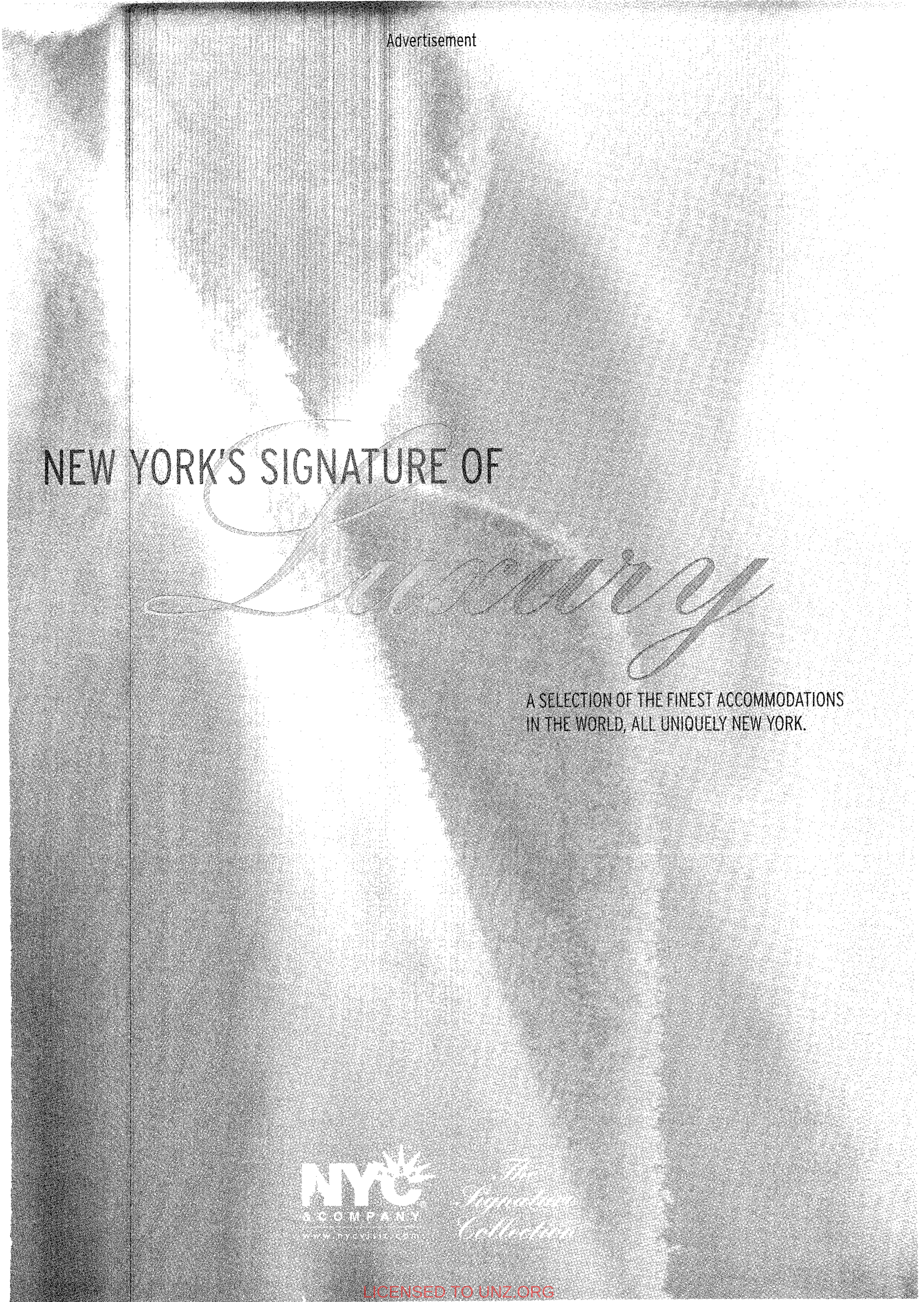
When I first laid eyes on Marty Reisman in Vegas, he was zooming through the convention center (Marty walks faster than most people run), in his panama hat and a bright-orange sports jacket, on his way to a match. Reisman, who marches to his own drummer and likes to talk about his march and his drummer at length, introduced me to various people, all of whom had fun commenting on Marty in front of him. "He's a legend," one U.S.A.T.T. official said. "You're talking to a very questionable character here," another said. Lily Yip, a two-time Olympian and a dynamic force in organized table tennis (and the mother of two top-ranked teen-agers), said to me, with a smile directed at Reisman, "Everything he says is not true." At one point, I saw a ten-year-old staring at Reisman's hardbat—he had obviously never seen such a thing before—and I suggested to Marty that he hit with him a little. Reisman, who, like all the top players of his generation, played mostly money matches, as a way both to practice and to make some dough, said to the boy, "Do you want to play for money?" Some of the playing at the Nationals was spectacular, some of it was extremely good, and some of it was moving: Thelma (Tybie) Sommer was playing in the over-seventy women's singles—her game wasn't what it had been when she won the world championship mixed doubles with Dick Miles, in 1948, of course, but there she was, playing.

One of the reasons I had gone to the Nationals was to meet Dick Miles, who, at the age of seventy-seven, was being honored by the U.S.A.T.T. for lifetime achievement. Miles, who is generally considered the greatest American player of the twentieth century, was, if not the anti-Reisman, then the non-Reisman of table tennis. He was Björn Borg to Reisman's Jimmy Connors—a no-nonsense, self-contained player. The two men, who have known each other for sixty years, since the days at Lawrence's, are physically and sartorially poles apart as well: Reisman is a lanky, balletic six-footer, given to wearing attention-getting—what my father would call "zooty"—clothes, and Miles is a compact five feet seven, who, the day I met him, was wearing light-brown corduroys and an oatmeal-colored wool sweater over a plaid flannel shirt.

At the end of the hardbat finals, between Lily Yip and Steve Berger, I introduced myself to Miles and asked him whether he thought the hardbat game was superior to sponge. He likes both—he switched to sponge in the early sixties—but he said that a problem with the sponge game, from the point of view of spectatorship, is that the speed of the game is such that the unsophisticated viewer can't see that the winner of a point has actually earned it, with the spin he put on the ball. "In tennis, you can see it," he said. "In table tennis, it looks like an error."

Miles told me that as a young man he had wanted to be a writer. (He once took a job at *The New Yorker*, as what was then called an office boy, but quit after five days.) Both he and Reisman are, in fact, writers; Miles covered table tennis and wrote features for *Sports Illustrated* and has written an unpublished novel, and Reisman recently finished a second autobiography. Miles was known for carrying around a copy of "Ulysses"; Reisman called me the other morning ("Did I wake you up?" he said. "Yes," I said, and he kept talking for forty-five minutes) and recited a John Donne poem. But what Miles really wanted to talk about was a young man named Jake Carter, whom he had coached a little, and who was here at the Nationals.

One Saturday afternoon just over a year ago, Miles had gone to play at the Manhattan club but couldn't get a table—a birthday party was in session. "I said to the guy who runs it, 'Look, do you mind if I give the kids some pointers?' Jake's mother and father were there, and



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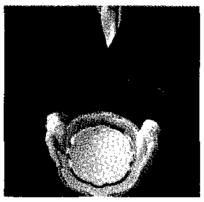
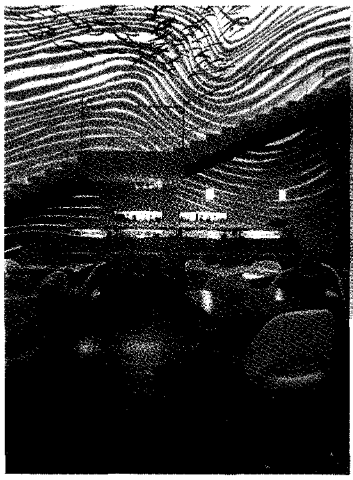


# *where to dine*



With every conceivable variety of cuisine in the greater New York City area—from Vietnamese, Argentine, Cuban, and Kosher to Scandinavian, Creole, and Moroccan—many are quite simply the best there is. Start on Central Park South with a citadel of contemporary haute cuisine, **Alain Ducasse**. Patrons choose from such once-in-a-lifetime offerings as grilled bison loin *miroton* with tomato and onion marmalade or filet of striped bass *à la plancha* with celery and black truffles. The supremely attentive staff serves canapés on vintage Lalique. Simply ne plus ultra.

Further west, overlooking Columbus Circle, is **Jean-Georges**, the recipient of a four-star New York *Times* review and countless other culinary kudos. Adam Tihany décor provides a subtle earth-toned backdrop for Jean-Georges Vongerichten's lively, Asian-accented French delicacies. Near Lincoln Center, **Picholine** wins bravos for its savory, wild mushroom duck risotto and other artful French-Mediterranean creations.

On Broadway, head to the theatrical **Blue Fin**. This imaginative four-hundred-seat setting features sophisticated seafood fare, such as herb-crusted wild salmon with New Zealand mussels. After dinner, climb the floating staircase that leads to a live jazz club upstairs.

In SoHo, dine at casually hip **Fiamma Osteria**. Critics rave about the sautéed sea scallops with baby artichokes and truffle vinaigrette as well as the establishment's hearty pasta specialties. Nearby, **Lupa Osteria Romana**, co-owned by master chef Mario Batali (of the Food Network's "Molto Mario"), is where fresh, locally grown ingredients are cooked just as they would be in a Roman trattoria. Highly recommended is the *bavette cacio e pepe* (thin linguine with a light coating of pecorino and parmesan cheeses, cracked black pepper, and, of course, Batali's favorite ingredient, olive oil). *Delizioso.*

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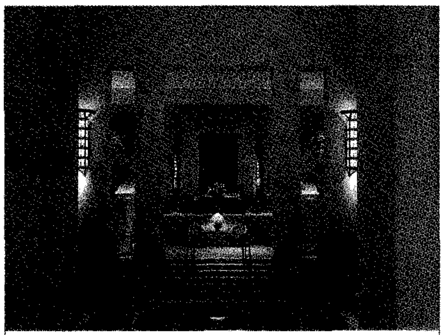

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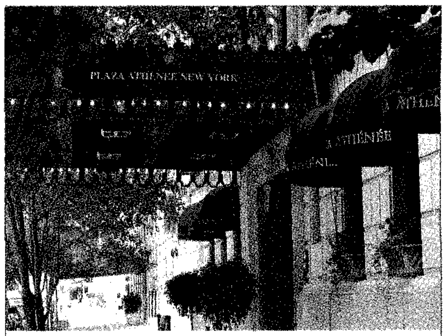

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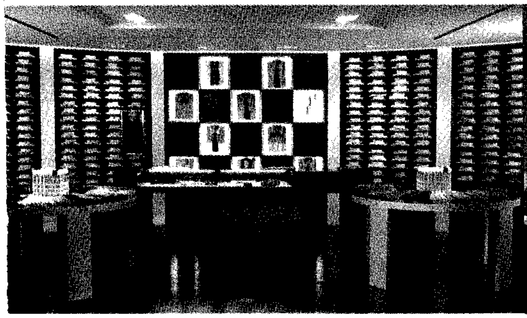
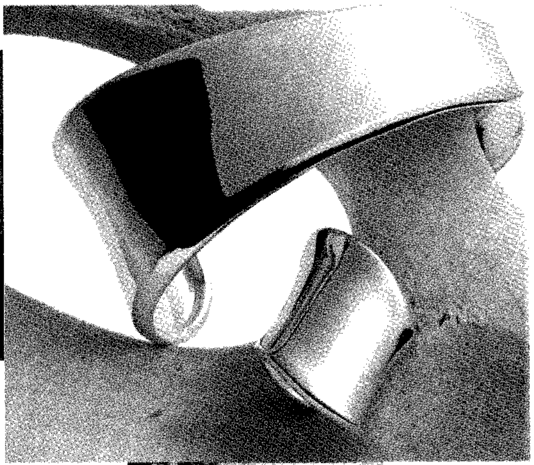
# *where to shop*





*left to right:* Burberry, Wempe Jewelers, Robert Lee Morris Gallery, city shopper © Photonica *inset:* hotel doorman © Taxi

With so many designers' flagship stores clustered in New York, as well as the world's greatest department stores, there's a wealth of high fashion from which to choose.

According to a concierge at one Signature Collection hotel, "We have formed a unique relationship with many stores: They open early to accommodate special customers, and we can even arrange an in-room fashion show for someone to view the season's new line." Another Signature Collection hotel offers serious shoppers a package that includes discounts off initial purchases at both **Donna Karan New York** and the Art-Deco shopping Valhalla, **Bloomingdale's**.

Fifty-seventh Street is a gathering place for the world's smartest luxury boutiques, and the newly opened **Burberry** colossus has only further raised the bar. With twenty-four-thousand feet of fashion choices spanning six floors, Burberry's largest store is just the place to survey the new Prorsum line. Here, too, the famous Burberry London trench coat can be made to order.

The **Ralph Lauren** look is known the world over, but it's only in New York that shoppers can browse the designer's flagship location in a restored eighteen-nineties Upper East Side mansion. While the décor is aristocratic—antique Persian carpets, vintage Louis Vuitton trunks, and sparkling Baccarat chandeliers—the fashion is both classic and current. From the iconic polo shirt to cashmere throws and alligator clutches, the designer's inventory is bound to tempt.

Thoughtful visitors to Gotham will want to bring home a memorable gift or two, and New York's **Crystal District**, a five-block stretch of Madison Avenue between 58th and 63rd streets, proffers uncommon choices. Baccarat, Lalique, Daum, and Swarovski all have exquisite limited-numbered collectors' editions. At Steuben you can have your crystal artwork engraved or specially commissioned.

On Fifth Avenue and 55th Street, visit **Wempe Jewelers'** newly dedicated Patek Philippe display and its glass-enclosed workshop that allows customers a chance to eye craftsmen at work. Just a block north is **Boutique Piaget**, makers of fine jewelry and watches. While much of the legendary line is sold worldwide, many of the Fifth Avenue location's offerings are exclusive to this boutique.

If the style and energy of SoHo is more your bent, visit the **Robert Lee Morris Gallery**. Displays of eighteen-karat gold and silver jewelry creations include flared neckbands, butterfly rings, and other exquisitely sculpted designs, crafted by this pioneer of wearable art.

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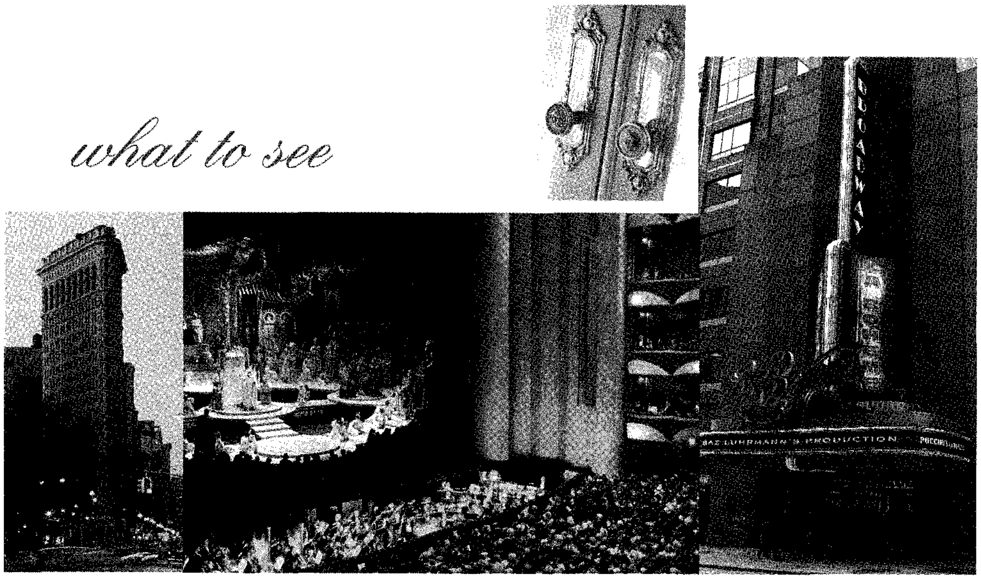
# *what to see*



Concierges at Signature Collection hotels have been known to occasionally score even the most coveted tickets to **Broadway** shows for their guests. Test their ticket-conjuring wizardry and request a pair on the aisle for "La Bohème," "Hairspray," or the highly anticipated revival of "Gypsy," starring Bernadette Peters, at the Sam S. Shubert Theatre. (Previews begin March 31st).

During the renovation of its Vivian Beaumont Theater, **Lincoln Center Theater** presents the American première of "Vincent in Brixton" on Broadway at the Golden Theatre. Written by Nicholas Wright, it's based on Van Gogh's early life in London. (Previews begin February 13th).

Spanning five millennia of art, the magnificent repository that is **The Metropolitan Museum of Art** is unparalleled. Current exhibits include "Leonardo da Vinci, Master Draftsman" (through March 30th) and "African-American Artists, 1929-1945" (through May 4th).

There are two newcomers to New York's broad swath of cultural institutions. With a focus on twentieth-century German and Austrian art, the **Neue Galerie New York** on the Museum Mile will present the first major U.S. retrospective of German artist Christian Schad (March 14–June 9). Downtown, the **Museum of Sex's** "How New York City Transformed Sex in America," details the history of the city's sexual subculture, through July 3rd.

Don't miss the opportunity to participate in NYC & Company's behind-the-scenes **Insider's Hours** cultural tours that feature hour-long gallery talks, and sneak peeks of upcoming exhibits and dress rehearsals in progress, through March 31st.

Or explore the city on foot. Take a **Big Onion** "Gangs of New York" walking tour or one lead by the highly lauded **Joyce Gold**, who authoritatively guides guests through a variety of the city's neighborhoods.

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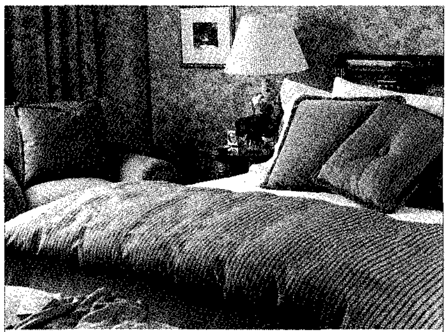

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they said to me, ‘Dick, do you ever give lessons?’ I said, ‘No, I don’t want to.’ They asked again, so I named a price that was so high I thought they’d say no—a hundred dollars an hour—and they said yes. I gave him three lessons and then went to Hawaii.” (Miles spends four months of the year in Hawaii.) “He has talent, so I gave him to Steve Berger.” (Berger, who also plays jazz guitar with Bob Dorough at Iridium every Sunday, played table tennis at Reisman’s when he was a teen-ager, in the seventies, and became a protégé of Miles’s when he was about twenty. He is one of the few people who have close ties to both players—in the table-tennis world, that’s a little like being the patient of both Freud and Jung.)

I talked to Jake, a slender twelve-year-old with brown hair and a dusting of freckles on his nose, who was polite and friendly, despite having just lost a tough match during which the spectators—the large, unsportsmanlike family of his opponent—had been loud and distracting, and he had hurt his ankle. Jake told me that he was in the sixth grade at the Dalton School, in Manhattan, and that his interest in table tennis had started the summer before last, when his family got a table for their country house. “Then I found this place on a Hundredth and Broadway, so I had my eleventh-birthday party there.” What did his friends think of his enthusiasm for the sport? “It’s mixed,” he said. “There are some people who think it’s cool, and some people who think it’s kind of dumb, like ‘Ping-Pong? Why would anybody want to play Ping-Pong?’ ”

While I was in Las Vegas, I did a terrible thing: I bought a sponge racquet. I had to—I didn’t have a usable hardbat of my own anymore, and the racquet that Reisman had promised to have made for me hadn’t materialized after almost a year. I had to have something to play with, and I also knew that, if I was going to play with the general run of humanity, I would need this kind of racquet. I was with Marty, though—I didn’t approve of sponge, so I bought a cheap, ready-made racquet, and deliberately avoided learning anything about particular rubbers, sponge thickness, blades, and speed glue (and also thereby avoided spending a hundred dollars more than the nineteen I did spend). I went back to New York, and asked Jake Carter to give me a lesson. Jake did his best, but perhaps he was a little shy about instructing someone thirty-four years his senior, and it didn’t help that I was using my new sponge racquet for the first time. He tried to show me how to make a forehand loop drive—the essential shot of the sponge game—but I couldn’t quite do it; my racquet wanted to go forward more than it wanted to go up. So we just played some games. He spotted me six points, and beat me. (We played to eleven points.) Then he spotted me eight points, and beat me again. I beat him once, but that’s because he couldn’t play his usual game against me. Steve Berger told me that Jake’s strongest suit was letting an opponent open an attack: “He’ll allow you to do that and then he’ll hit it right at you. We call it a *kishke* shot. You aim it at their elbow.” But I couldn’t get a rhythm going, and my hitting was unpredictable. (“Whoops!” “Sorry!”)

A week or so later, I got a lesson from Berger, and that went much better. Steve had been at the club the night I played with Jake, and, when Jake was playing with someone else, I’d heard Steve yelling at him to keep his head down, and I’d thought his approach was unnecessarily harsh. Once I realized, when Steve was showing me the starting position for the forehand loop drive, that he’d been talking about the racquet head and not Jake’s own head, I revised my opinion of his approach, and I revised it even further when he told me that I was a natural. Still, I found the sponge racquet hard to get used to. Berger had taken off the rubber that my racquet came with, which was of mediocre quality, and replaced it with topnotch rubber; it was disconcertingly lively, and I didn’t feel the connection with the racquet that I had when I played with a hardbat. Hitting the ball didn’t give me that “Aaaahhh” feeling; instead I got a “Whoa! Hey, what the—” feeling. But I did all right, for a beginner. At least, Steve said so.

A couple of weeks ago, I played with Marty for the first time since the spring. His new favorite place to play is the basement of Harry Evans’s apartment building; last summer, Harry got the building’s board to agree to let him put a table down there. There is, of course, a couch for balls to get lost under (there must be something about this in the U.S.A.T.T. rule book: “a couch, preferably inconveniently placed, must be present at all times during play”), but the conditions—the lighting, the amount of space around the table, the pock-*pock* acoustics, the distance from the inhabited area of the building, so that no one can hear you shout “*Nooooo!*” when you miss a shot that you should have made—are excellent. Marty spots Harry between ten and thirteen points when they play. (The hardbat game is still played to twenty-one points.) Several times, Harry was up 20–15, and Marty said, “It’s another deuce game, Harry,” meaning that he was going to get the next five points. And then he did. And then he’d win the game. Harry didn’t talk during points, but Marty did—during a rally, he’d look ahead to what he thought Harry was going to do and he’d say, “Forget it, Harry.”

The racquet Marty had promised me still wasn’t ready, so he let me use one of his—an old, classic paddle made by Bernard Hock. Though it was clear that, once again, I was out of practice, it was a pleasure to hold a hardbat in my hand for the first time in months. I was home. My backhand chop started coming back, and I hit a couple of good forehands. When Harry suggested that Marty and I play a game—something we had never done—I told him to play his normal game, as if he were playing for real. He said O.K., and spotted me eighteen points. He won the first game almost as soon as it started, and I realized that he had never unleashed even a tenth of his arsenal on me. The second game was close, but I won—Marty made two shots that went long and missed the table, and then he hit a fairly hard forehand of mine into the net. I turned to Harry, who was sitting on the couch, watching, and said, “Let the record show: I beat Marty Reisman.” I have a feeling, though, that Marty hit my shot into the net on purpose. In fact, I’m quite sure of it. I didn’t win the game—he let me win it. But, if he’ll keep spotting me eighteen points, I think that, with a little practice, I can beat him. ♦

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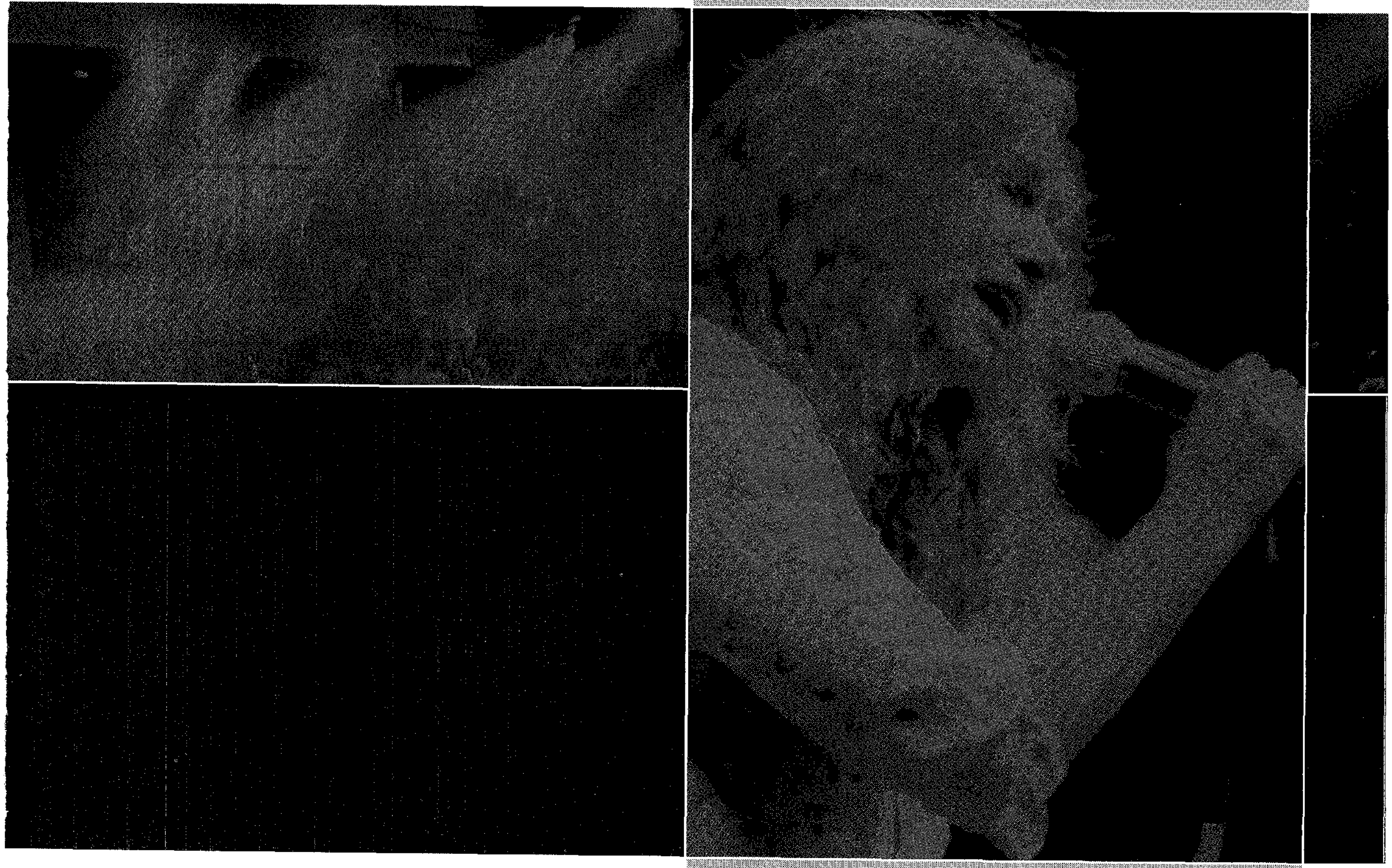
# CRACKING THE BEAT

By JANINE NICHOLS

To brave the alleyways and exotic cuisine of an unfamiliar destination but never to discover its musical pulse is to have misread a treasure map. A net search or guidebook can lead to a shop where vegetable-dyed textiles may be had for a song, but where to find the songs? One's best bet of tracking down a destination's capricious convergence of music, drink, and conversation the Irish call "good crack" is to ask a musician.

Take New York-based pop swain David Poe's first choice. You might not think to look for a place called **King Tut's Wah Wah Hut** in Glasgow, but the city's leading launch venue heads the silver-voiced singer-songwriter's list. A defiantly scruffy bar on St. Vincent Street in a neighborhood growing ever more posh, the Scottish club has built its considerable reputation with continuous live music by no-name bands. And its colorful history has only added to its patina: When members of then-unknown Brit rock band Oasis threatened to torch King Tut's if the club didn't include them on the bill one night, management acquiesced. Serendipitously, Creation Records' honcho Alan McGhee was present that same night, which ultimately led to the band clinching their first record deal—lore that only burnishes King Tut's reputation. Poe, once the soundman at CB's 313 Gallery (next door to the East Village's CBGB's), describes King Tut's acoustics as "superb," and considers it to be among the best rock clubs he has ever visited. "The Glaswegians have developed a great music scene



## NOTES FROM THE ROAD

Who better than the performing artists themselves to nominate the best music venues on the planet? Singer Joan Osborne cites some of her picks.

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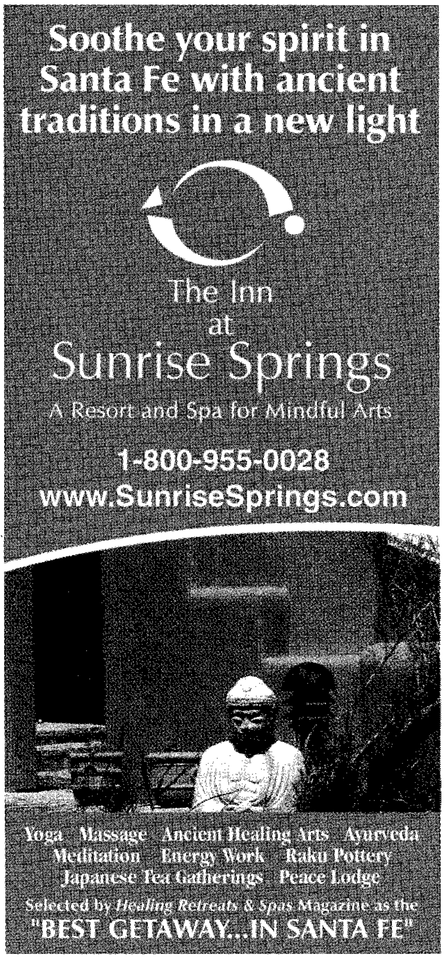
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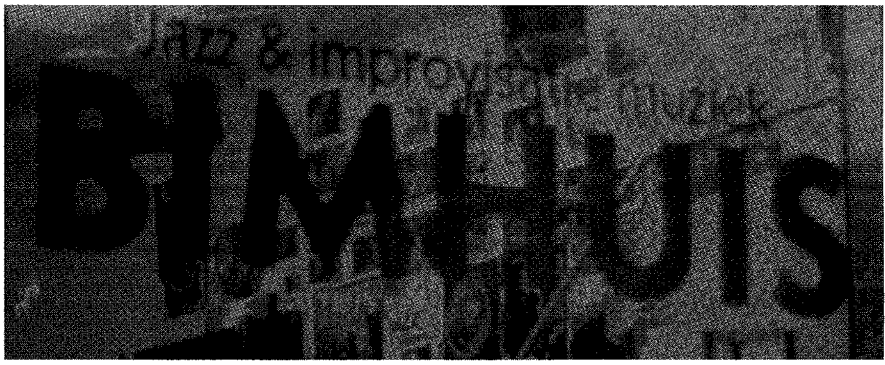
with groups like Arab Strap and Belle & Sebastian," reports Poe, "and this club is at the center of it." The subterranean bar is poetically gloomy and papered in yellowing posters from past gigs. Shows are upstairs: The stage is miniscule and a scarred pew lines the walls around it. There's little dancing, perhaps because there's little room or perhaps because Glaswegian indie rock lovers don't dance. The hope of club patrons is to catch a few rising stars early in their careers. (Artists like Canadian pop bard Ron Sexsmith and the punkish fiddler Eliza Carthy cut their teeth here.)

Poe also champions the **Kashmir Klub** in London's West End—an acoustic grotto run by Tony Moore, himself a musician. Admission is free; there are no guest lists; and, perhaps most satisfyingly, no "pay to play" fee for performers. Moore enforces a strict ban on talking during performances (as many as six a night). Those who cannot keep mum are directed to take their banter to the bar where they can monitor the stage on closed-circuit television. Poe has spotted guitarist Steve Hackett and singer-songwriter Beth Orton in the Kashmir audience, and also met Brit songstress Kiki Dee there. "We drank a lot of wine late at night and passed around the acoustic guitar till dawn playing George Harrison and Tim Hardin songs," he remembers.



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**DUTCH TREAT**
Bimhuis continues to play a pivotal role in the evolution of Amsterdam's improvisational music scene.

Ask jazz guitarist Bill Frisell, a seasoned road veteran, where in the world he would send music aficionados and he brightens at the challenge: "Anywhere in the world? Even if I didn't know who was playing? The **Bimhuis** [pro: bim'-house]," he volunteers at once, naming the Amsterdam venue that has played a crucial role in that city's creative music evolution. Opened in 1974, the hall has generated countless radio and television broadcasts, and hundreds of records have been cut there. It's also the subject of music critic and writer Kevin Whitehead's "Bimhuis 25," a collection of stories and photographs he edited that commemorates the institution's twenty-fifth anniversary. "The room holds about two hundred; the sound is excellent, and every seat is good. The audience sits real close to the musicians in a steep semi-circle of risers, and they listen very attentively, which I love," says Frisell. "There are great musicians on the Dutch scene that are not much known in the U.S.—cellist Ernst Reisinger, pianist Misha Mengelberg—as well as lots of American ex-patriates like clarinetist Michael Moore and drummer Michael Vatcher. It's a

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treat to hear and play with them."

Then Frisell remembers the **Eremitage**, a genuine jazz hound's grail in Schwaz, Austria, and his tone becomes almost wistful. One could chance upon a musicians' summit at this jazz asylum in the Inntal Valley. "It was one of the first places I ever played in Europe in '79 or '80," he says, recalling a gig with bassist and composer Eberhard Weber. "My booking agent moved to this tiny, remote place (about thirty kilometers from Innsbruck) just to be near the music," he says. "There's no local jazz scene. It's more like an oasis for jazz musicians travelling back and forth between festivals and dates in Italy and Germany. I met clarinetist Don Byron there even though we were both living in New York at the time. There's only forty or fifty seats in a tiny, nondescript building—no stage, no P.A., and the band just sets up in front of the bar."

To his enduring astonishment, when TV composer/indie rocker Ben Vaughn first brought his combo to the **Malasaña District of Madrid** in 1989, zealots threw roses. "An outsider could easily have mistaken our tune 'Surfin' Bird' for the national anthem," he says, musing on the gig with obvious satisfaction. "It's black leather jackets for the guys and variations on the Betty Page or Ivy Rorschach look for the gals. Joey Ramone is revered as a saint there." The district is also famed for its large number of punk-inspired bars.

In Madrid, the memory of the Velvet Underground and the Stooges is alive and well at clubs named after the bands' classics, **Sister Ray** and **No Fun**. Other hot spots include **Tupper Ware**, **Loui-Loui**, **Garaje Sónico**, and **La Vía Láctea** (Milky Way). The district's hangs are often small and feverish, and dense with dancers and Iggy posters. "Like they hired CBGB's decorator, if it'd had one," says Vaughn.

Closer to home, composer and trumpeter Dave Douglas singles out New York City's **Tonic** for a "wider look at the new music scene. On any given night, you can get a great glimpse of the changes happening in improvised music." Douglas is likewise taken with "the progressive booking policy of the **Jazz Standard**," which, he says, makes him "proud to be a New Yorker." Douglas also lauds the **Jazz Bakery** in Culver City, just outside of L.A. "I find the same spirit of warmth and concern for the music here that I find at The Village Vanguard," he says, citing his favorite Manhattan club.

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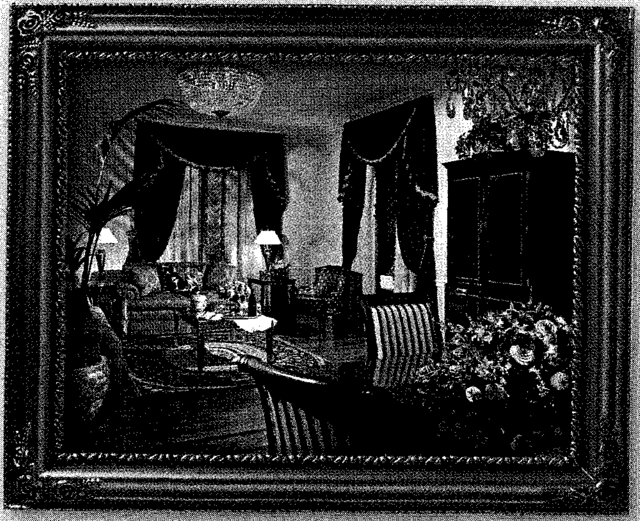

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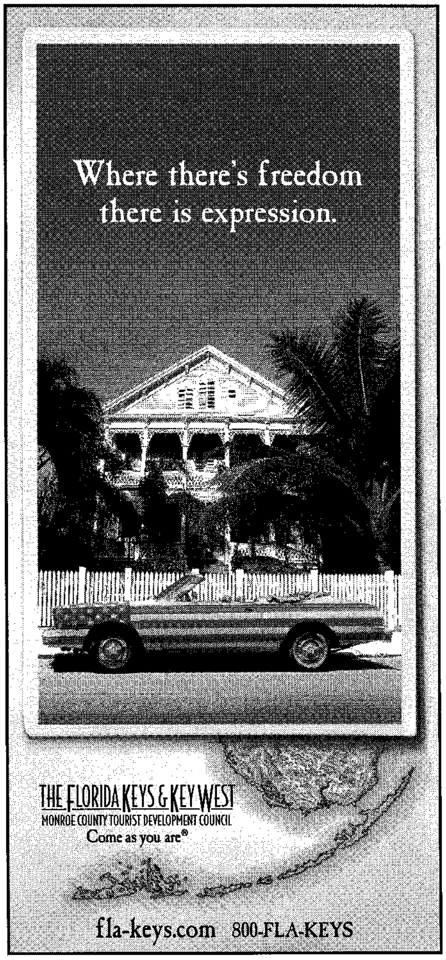
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building—an Art Deco treasure—the Jazz Bakery was founded by jazz singer/lyricist Ruth Price. Lamenting the disappearance of small but respectable jazz venues, Price opened the Bakery as a nonprofit jazz club in 1992 by first booking friends like jazz pianists Tommy Flanagan and George Shearing, and vocalist Annie Ross (of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross). Price has had a lot to do with the Bakery's superior acoustics. To complement the lofty, wood-trestled ceiling, she insisted that the opposing walls not be built parallel to each other, and she had a resonant wood stage constructed. "Gregory Hines has told me it's the best tap 'instrument' in the world," says the seventy-two-year-old Price. There's no smoking, no talking, no alcohol. All ages are welcome to fill the two hundred and thirty seats. The Benny Golson Quartet and pianists Jacky Terrasson and Hank Jones played there last month, and legendary blues guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer will make an appearance in the next couple of weeks.

Currently touring for her new album of rock covers, "How Sweet It Is," soulful chanteuse Joan Osborne is a staunch fan of the **Belly Up Tavern** in Solana Beach, north of San Diego, where the sound is routinely superior. The club opened as a pool hall almost thirty years ago in what is now the high-style Cedros Design District. Housed in one of the 1952 Quonset huts built for the military, the Belly Up is acknowledged as the locale's first happening destination. David Hodges, now sole proprietor, assiduously raised the club's profile by booking blues titans like John Lee Hooker,

HAY FESTIVAL
© Justin Williams

## >> > NEWSLINE

**FINLAND**—Thanks in part to its government's longstanding commitment to music education, Finland teems with academies, orchestras, and festivals. It has produced a startling number of world-renowned conductors including Osmo Vänskä of the Minnesota Symphony. Finland's most diversified cultural celebration, **The Helsinki Festival** (August 22–September 7), showcases a wide variety of musical, dance, theatre, visual arts, and film programs. Performances by Los Angeles Philharmonic maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Mariinsky Theatre from St. Petersburg, Russia as well as a piano recital by renowned Hungarian virtuoso András Schiff will be featured. **WALES**—The rural market town of Hay hosts the sixteenth annual **Hay Festival of Literature** (May 23–June 1) featuring, along with literary noteworthies like Annie Proulx and Don DeLillo, musical guests such as Van Morrison and Alison Moyet. Intimate readings, conversations, and performances are set in pub-like venues. **SCOTLAND**—Although "The Guinness Book of Records" ranks it the world's largest arts festival, what makes the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe** (August 3–25) unique is its anything-goes programming. All can participate, from aspiring entertainers to established actors. (Last year, Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon staged a reading of Anne Nelson's play, "The Guys.")

>

Big Mama Thorton, Buddy Guy, and Albert Collins before they were household names. Then he added some rock bands and a shot of reggae and rhythm and blues. Last month alone, the club hosted incendiary R. & B. diva Etta James (who has been loyal to the club for twenty years), Texas rockabilly trio Reverend Horton Heat, and the sultry Erykah Badu. Hip-hop and turntable artists such as DJ Shadow also have their dedicated nights, as does salsa on Sundays. Says Osborne admiringly, "There's always something going on there and these people are wild."

© Matti Tirri/Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau

**HELSINKI HUVILA**

A tent at the annual Finnish summer fest houses Fado and jazz artists alike.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway for the thirty-fourth annual **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** (April 25–May 4), and Osborne vividly recalls her first outing as a spectator to the landmark bash: "Some friends and I rented a little shotgun house near the Garden District and saw almost nothing but gospel at the fairgrounds. Every other singer was some fourteen-year-old with no professional experience and a huge voice, giving me goosebumps. I couldn't leave," she reports. "In the clubs at night I saw Nathan and the Zydeco Cha Chas at the Rock and Bowl and Marcia Ball at the Maple Leaf. She comes onstage looking like your Humanities teacher," says Osborne, "and then sits down at the piano and wails like Jerry Lee Lewis. Afterwards, my friends and I bought pounds of crawfish and boiled them for breakfast while the sun came up."

In later years, Osborne herself performed in the Crescent City's biggest music soirée and even got around to visiting some of the fest's other nine stages that featured everyone from Solomon Burke to Celia Cruz, The Staple Singers, and Beausoleil. Osborne also gives high marks to the R. & B. heavy **City Stages** festival in Birmingham, Alabama, (May 16–18). "I was amazed at the quality and variety of

## >> > NEWSLINE

**AUSTIN, TX**—Now in its seventeenth year, the **South By Southwest Music Conference** (March 12–16) has become a favorite late winter destination for music industry types and fans who wish to revel in good weather, barbeque, and far more music from emerging and well-established acts than any three people could see in five days. (Note: You can purchase a separate wristband for about $100 that permits admission to fifty venues running concurrently with the confab, without ever actually attending SXSW.) This year, look out for the rare appearance of southern rock and soul legend, Tony Joe White.

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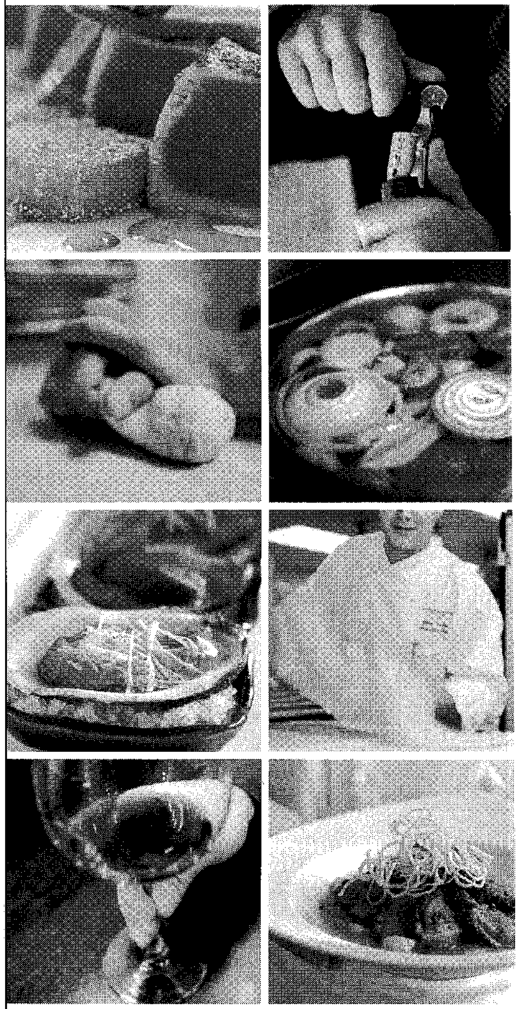

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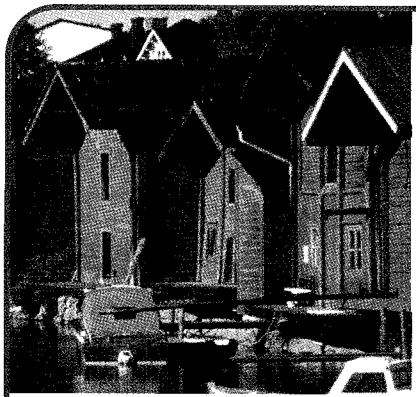

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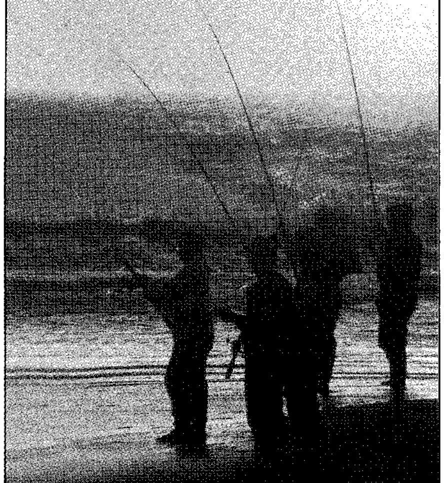

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music they present," she says. "Plus the city is world-famous for its barbeque. The good ones include the South Side's Dreamland Ribs and Jim 'N Nick's."

Veterans of the worldwide, contemporary- music festival circuit, like composer and Golden Globe nominee Philip Glass and violinist David Harrington of the Kronos Quartet, have their favorites too. For Glass, "Spoleto is still the best." He refers to **Spoleto USA**—the music and theatre festival in Charleston, South Carolina, which will span seventeen days and nights this spring (May 23–June 8). The event turns the graceful city's many splendid theatres and churches into music-filled venues. "It's free of enforced distinctions between high and low art," says Glass, adding, "The roster of performing artists is international, with the mix of classical

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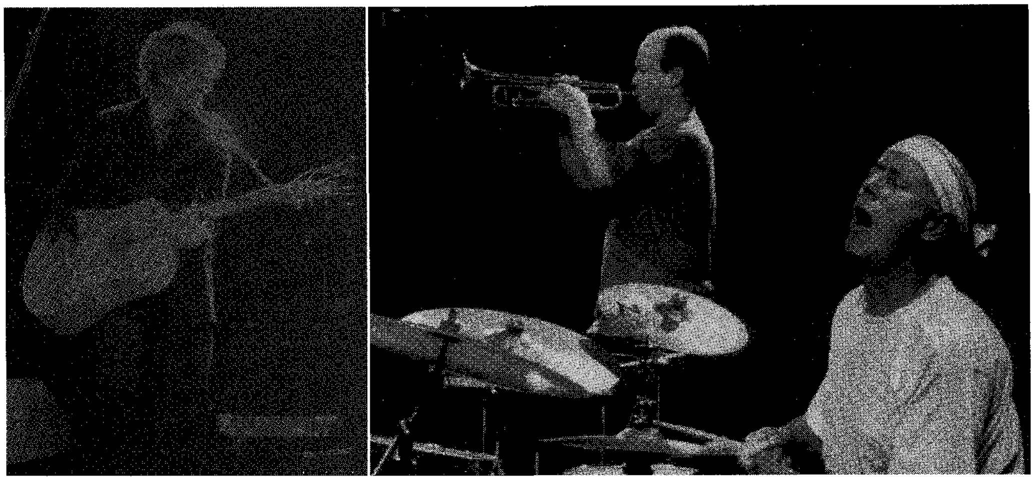
and experimental music and theatre I favor."

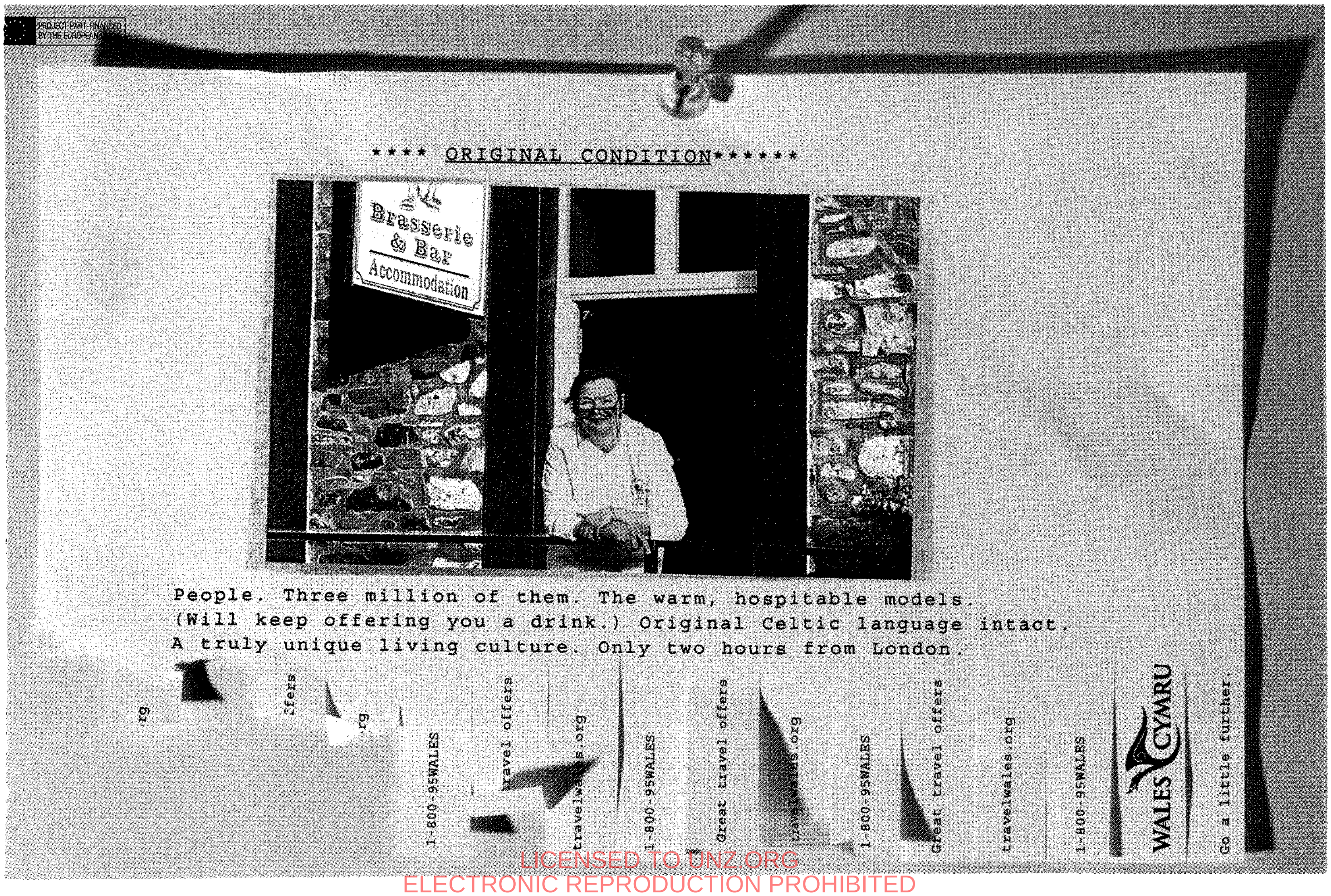
This year, that ethos is reflected in a new production of Léo Delibes' ravishing lyric opera "Lakmé," Handel's opera seria "Tamerlano," Morton Feldman's infrequently performed score of Samuel Beckett's radio play, "Words and Music," and Meredith Monk's 1976 Obie Award multimedia piece, "Quarry."

"Keep your eye on **Meltdown** too," Glass advises, referring to London's once-classical spring music festival now gone trippingly off its rocker. Some years ago, the series' then-producer David Sefton had the idea to pass Meltdown's curatorial hat every February. Since then, Nick Cave, Robert Wyatt, Scott Walker, Laurie Anderson, Elvis Costello, and, most recently, David Bowie have been given carte blanche to program shows per their passions in Queen Elizabeth and Royal Festival halls. When Costello recruited Bill Frisell, the pairing resulted in a seven-song record release ("Deep Dead Blue"). Laurie Anderson invited



**THE LATITUDES OF ATTITUDE**

*(Left)* David Poe at New York's Irving Plaza, *(center)* Dave Douglas and Han Bennink in Amsterdam, *(right)* Kronos Quartet rehearsing "Sun Rings" in San Francisco.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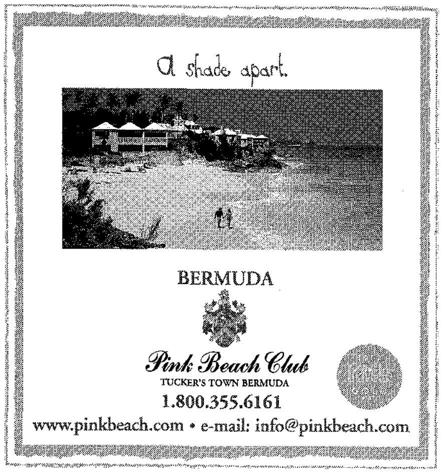

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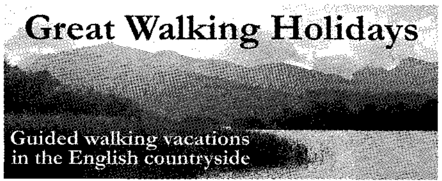

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composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, author Salman Rushdie, and choreographer Bill T. Jones. Nick Cave brought Hal Willner's "Harry Smith Project" to Meltdown with some thirty artists performing music from Smith's hugely influential "Anthology of American Folk Music." This year's talent roster will be announced later this month.

David Harrington, for his part, casts a vote for the new **Only Connect** festival, also in London, at the Barbican Centre (March 8–April 26). On March 22nd the Kronos Quartet will premier Terry Riley's "Sun Rings," a work for string quartet and sounds culled from various Voyager missions (whistling solar winds, thrumming aurora). The piece was commissioned for the quartet by the NASA Arts Program and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. There will be spectacular visual accompaniment by stage designer Willie Williams of U2 fame.

Along with Glass, Harrington is a fan of the "massive, invigorating," city-wide **Hong Kong Arts Festival** (February 14–March 9). He enjoys festivals as a listener as much as he does as a performer, and he saw his first Chinese opera there. "I sat in the front row," he remembers. "I was moved by the informal atmosphere that existed among the musicians and the audience even though the action on stage was very ritualized. The orchestra members talked and smoked and ate during the performance when they weren't playing. The audience was just as casual; it was like a big family event. I had the impression that the music was very deep in

## >> > NEWSLINE

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**—Celebrating the country's national dance and musical style, **The Santo Domingo Merengue Festival** (July 21–30) is the city's biggest party of the year. Dance in streets along the oceanside boulevard, El Malecón, as Dominican musicians groove on twenty different bandstands. Past headliners have included Juan Luis Guerra, Los Hermanos Rosario, and Johnny Ventura, the singing legend who's now the city's mayor. Meanwhile, for a vibrant dose of merengue as well as salsa, Latin reggae, cumbia, and Spanish rap, the **Guacara Taina** club quakes with dance beats seven nights a week. (The scene heats up after 11 P.M. and swings till the wee-er than wee hours.) The preëminent multilevel Santo Domingo club is located in a huge underground cave and features a mélange of Caribbean and d.j. artists.

the collective unconscious of the performers as well as the audience, while the gathering itself seemed to be the primary event," says Harrington. This year's cross-pollinated program features "Beijing Folk Rock" with Yang Yi ("China's Bob Dylan"), and the "unplugged" folk songs of northwest China, alongside Handel's "Messiah" performed by the Paris-based period instrument ensemble Les Arts Florissants.

And, should you need during these dark winter days to imagine the pleasures of August, Dave Douglas recommends you suit up for **I Suoni delle Dolomiti** (Sounds of the Dolomites), a free, open-air music festival in the mountains of northern Italy near Trento. Performances take place on temporary stages set up in vast meadows of "The Sound of Music" variety; artists and audiences trek up the mountain together led by professional Alpine guides.

"To hear great music in such an astounding setting is a rare pleasure," says Douglas. "On one visit I played a duo concert with Dutch drummer Han Bennink on the precipice of a sheer mountain cliff. He played way off his drum kit—hitting rocks and trees, eventually working his way down into the woods," he says. "Fans, on the edge of their seats, could no longer see him, but could still hear him tapping away. Then suddenly the music stopped," says Douglas. "The audience was completely silent, concerned. After a long pause, Han yelled out, 'I'm done, Dave!'—to thunderous (and relieved) applause."

Though musicians can be an invaluable resource for sussing out the musical pulse of a destination, ultimately the will to undertake a cultural journey, with or without an Alpine guide, is your own. ●

*(Additional reporting by Brian Berger and Dan Ouellette.)*

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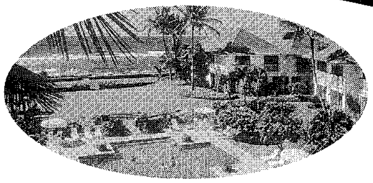

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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

# SPEND! SPEND! SPEND!

*Where did Tyco's money go?*

BY JAMES B. STEWART

On a Friday afternoon last May, Mark Belnick, the general counsel of Tyco International, the giant industrial conglomerate, hurried into the Boca Raton office of the company's chairman and chief executive officer, L. Dennis Kozlowski. Belnick had with him a copy of a grand-jury subpoena that had just been served on the company, and that named Kozlowski personally.

Kozlowski stared at the text, which called for documents "reflecting all transactions between Tyco International . . . and Alexander Apsis or Alexander Apsis Fine Arts, LLC from 1999 to the present." The subpoena evidently concerned some paintings that Kozlowski had bought the previous year, after he had decided to become a serious art collector. They included a Monet and a Renoir. For the Monet, he had paid $3.95 million; for the Renoir, $5.5 million.

After studying the subpoena, Kozlowski picked up the phone and called Christine Berry, who worked for Fine Collections Management, in West Palm Beach, and was Kozlowski's art adviser. She had taken him to various galleries and negotiated the purchase of the paintings. According to Kozlowski, the following conversation ensued:

"Who did we buy the Monet from?" he asked.

Berry answered that the seller was Alexander Apsis, a dealer and former specialist for Sotheby's in London and New York. Without mentioning that he'd just received a subpoena, Kozlowski began questioning Berry about the purchase of the painting and the details of its delivery to his office at Tyco's headquarters, in Exeter, New Hampshire. "Do you mind if my lawyer gets on the phone?" Kozlowski asked.

Berry didn't answer immediately. By having the art shipped to New Hampshire, Kozlowski had avoided paying New York State's 8.25-per-cent sales tax—some $325,000 on the Monet alone. She told Kozlowski that she didn't want to talk to the lawyer, and needed to check her records and get back to him.

Three days later, on Monday, May 6th, Berry sent Kozlowski a fax:

> I know you were inquiring about the shipment of the Monet to New Hampshire, so I dug up the paperwork associated with the delivery. Following this page is the bill of lading for the delivery. This is the only paperwork associated to these pieces. . . .
> Best,
> Christine

The accompanying bill of lading, dated January 2, 2002, on the letterhead of the Southern Trucking Company of Brooklyn, identifies the "consignee" as Dennis Kozlowski, 1 Tyco Park, Exeter, New Hampshire. The shipper's signature is Christine Berry's, and under "received by consignee" is the signature of an assistant at Tyco in New Hampshire. A list of five works was attached: the Monet, the Renoir, another Impressionist painting, an Old Master, and a 1920 British hunting scene.

In other words, the paperwork supported the notion that the art had been shipped and duly received outside of New York State. Neither Kozlowski nor Belnick felt it necessary to alarm Tyco's board by mentioning the subpoena.

But Berry had been mistaken. The bill of lading she sent Kozlowski was not the only document pertaining to the shipping. In a memo to Chris Hanson at Southern Trucking, dated December 21, 2001, she had written, in her own hand:

> Happy Happy Chris! Here is a list of the five paintings to go to NH (wink, wink). . . . Please make cardboard boxes or use crates to match the piece count. Cheers & thanks.

In New Hampshire, as Berry must have known, the assistant had signed for the delivery of empty boxes. One painting, the Monet, had simply been moved up the street from Apsis's apartment, at 930 Fifth Avenue, to Kozlowski's, at 950 Fifth, where Berry had hung it in the living room.

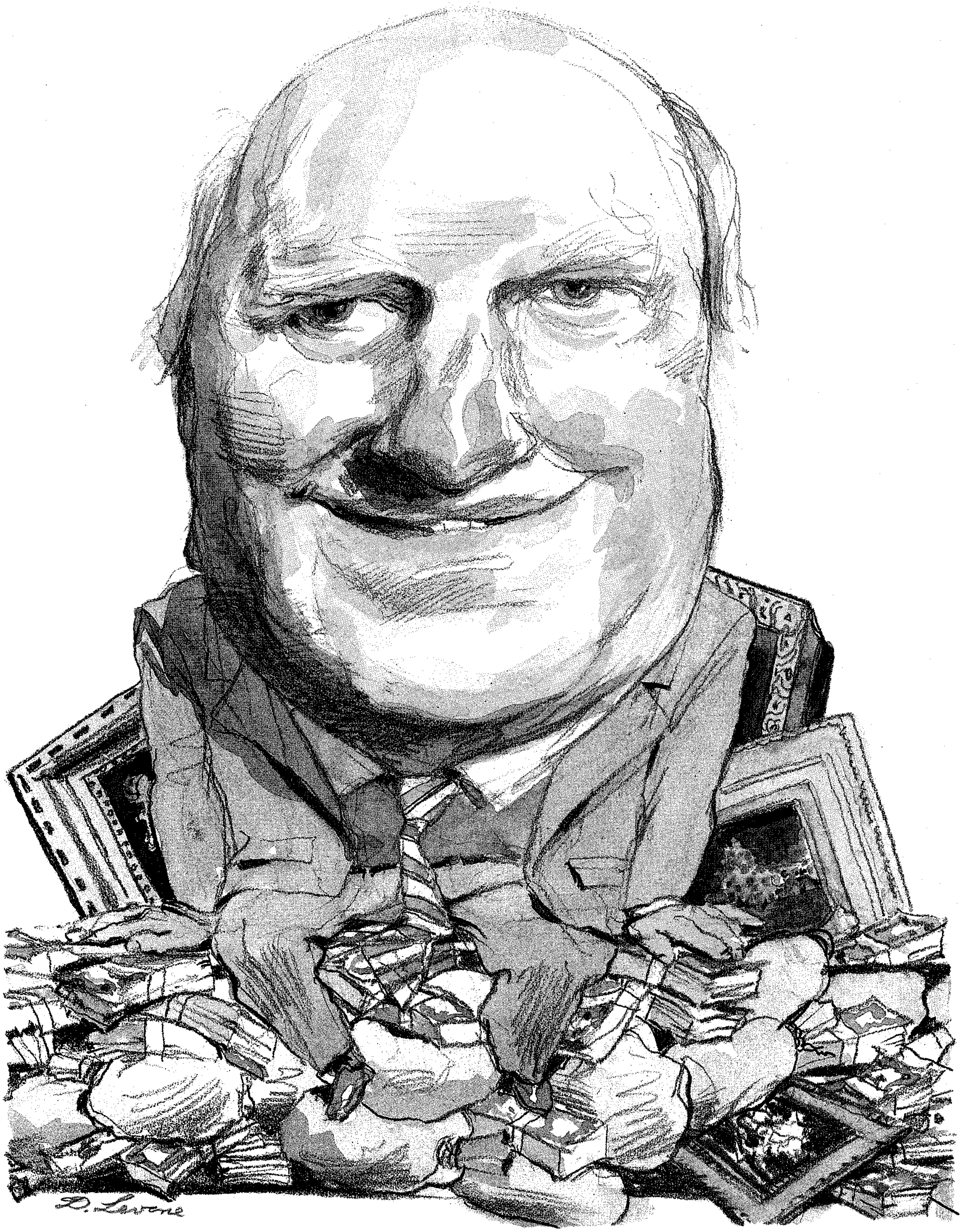
Kozlowski had taken command of Tyco ten years earlier and transformed it from an obscure former government laboratory with $3 billion in revenues to an industrial conglomerate with $36 billion in revenues. The company's products range from security systems and industrial valves to medical equipment. Tyco's market capitalization was $1.5 billion when Kozlowski took charge; by 2001, it was $106 billion. Most of Kozlowski's compensation came in Tyco stock and options, and he was worth more than $400 million.

In the weeks after the subpoena was issued, other Tyco executives began to notice that Kozlowski, uncharacteristically, was rarely in the firm's New York office, and often couldn't be reached. He retained a leading criminal lawyer, Stephen Kaufman. He cancelled meetings and business trips. Then, on Friday, May 31st, Kaufman informed Kozlowski that he was about to be indicted for tax evasion. The following Monday, Tyco announced that the board had demanded and received Kozlowski's resignation as chairman and C.E.O.

In September, a second indictment charged Kozlowski with personally defrauding Tyco of more than $300 million. Belnick was indicted for falsifying records. As details emerged in the media, Kozlowski, more than any other executive who had prospered in the great bull market of the nineties, came to personify an epoch of corporate fraud, executive greed, and personal extravagance. It was a role that almost no one would have predicted for him.

I first met Dennis Kozlowski this past December, at his lawyer's offices. I had spoken to him once before, in a brief telephone interview for a Talk of the Town item in February, 2000, about short sellers; he had insisted on personally taking my call and had answered

DAVID LEVINE



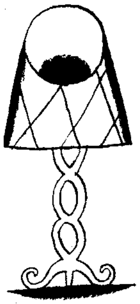
*One board member, seeing C.E.O. Dennis Kozlowski's lavish offices in Florida, said, "You've been a naughty boy."*

all my questions with refreshing directness. Since then, I'd bought a thousand shares of Tyco stock, at a price of $40.59, and watched it rise in value ($63.21), and then plummet ($6.98). I'd become familiar with Kozlowski's business strategy, his dedication to shareholders, and his reputation for thrift and charm. Overweight and unprepossessing at the age of fifty-six, he certainly didn't look the part of one of America's most successful executives. Once, according to a Tyco executive, after a television appearance with Carleton Fiorina, the sleek, poised C.E.O. of Hewlett-Packard, Kozlowski asked, "What am I doing here? I'm just a dumb Polish guy who can barely talk."

His disinclination to put on airs was part of his appeal. He told the audience at a Goldman, Sachs conference in Manhattan in November, 2000, "I grew up in Newark, New Jersey, right across the river. I was probably the first generation in my family to go to college. . . . But the real basis for everything I learned about acquisitions I learned from my Polish grandmother."

At our first meeting, Kozlowski, wearing a suit and tie, initially seemed uncomfortable and somewhat restless. He is bald, with a fringe of light-reddish hair, and his face colors easily. Perhaps because he isn't polished or articulate, he doesn't appear to be especially self-aware. He seemed bewildered by the intensity of the public outcry against him.

But, as he described Tyco's business operations, he had a sure command of even the smallest details, and was relaxed and eager to discuss them. His defense of Tyco's growth strategy—that is, his practice of frequently acquiring competitors in Tyco's disparate business lines—is persuasive even today. He does not seem naïve or unsophisticated about non-business subjects that interest him, such as wine and yachting, even though he is largely self-taught.



In the next few months, I interviewed Kozlowski on several occasions. Kaufman, his lawyer, was present, either in person or by phone. I agreed not to quote Kozlowski without Kaufman's authorization. Kozlowski spoke without inhibition about his former life—about his career, his youth in Newark, and his increasing forays over the years into the rarefied worlds of sailing, the art market, Fifth Avenue real estate, charitable boards, and Manhattan society.

Dennis Kozlowski grew up in a small apartment building in west-central Newark, a Polish and Italian Catholic working-class neighborhood that was largely demolished for urban-renewal projects in the late sixties. His father, Leo, was a member of the Polish American Republican Club of New Jersey and the local chapter of the Polish Falcons of America. Leo held a variety of jobs—professional boxer, reporter, and investigator for the New Jersey transit system. In the course of his work, he was shot twice; one bullet remained lodged in his neck for the rest of his life.

Kozlowski saw himself as strictly average, unlikely to achieve much beyond what his father or his uncles had. According to a recent *Business Week* investigation, friends remember him as "an easygoing, even comical kid." At Newark's West Side High School, a history teacher praised him for having a logical mind, and encouraged him to join the debate team. Debating in front of school assemblies gave him confidence, and during his senior year, on the day when students and teachers reversed roles, Kozlowski was named the school principal. His history teacher made him feel that "I could be a leader, if I applied myself," Kozlowski says.

After graduating, in 1964, Kozlowski lived at home while working to put himself through college at Seton Hall University, in South Orange. During his freshman year, he played basketball there. ("Not very well," he has said. "But good enough to get a couple of hundred dollars off my tuition.") He worked at a car wash, waited tables, and played guitar in a five-man band called the Hi-Tones. He joined two fraternities, did a fair amount of drinking, majored in accounting, and graduated in 1968 with a B-minus average. In his spare time, he dreamed of sailing and flying, two interests he'd had since childhood, and spent afternoons on Barnegat Bay on a Sunfish.

Kozlowski's first job after college was as an auditor for the S.C.M. Corporation, formerly the Smith-Corona typewriter company. He began dating a company secretary named Angeles Suarez, originally from the Bronx, and they married a few years later.

While visiting an S.C.M. operation outside San Francisco in 1969, Kozlowski discovered the Napa Valley, and visited the Robert Mondavi winery. Though he says he had never seen anything but Manischewitz at home, he began to acquire a taste for fine wine. In 1974, he followed his boss at S.C.M. to Nashua Corporation, a New Hampshire office-equipment manufacturer, where he was made director of auditing. That year, Kozlowski won an auction conducted by Boston's public-television affiliate for a wine-study course in Cambridge, where he earned a "master mixologist" certificate. On business trips to Europe, Kozlowski began dropping in on estates in Burgundy and Bordeaux. By the mid-seventies, he had a collection of nearly a thousand bottles of wine.

In 1975, a headhunter asked Kozlowski if he would be interested in a position as assistant comptroller and head of auditing at a company called Tyco Laboratories. The chairman of Tyco was Joseph Gaziano, a burly, garrulous former engineer. Emulating Harold Geneen, who built the conglomerate I.T.T., Gaziano had acquired a number of small companies in his years as chief executive. Now he was seeking bigger targets. The notes from Kozlowski's first job interview at Tyco survive: "A strong candidate but lacks judgment."

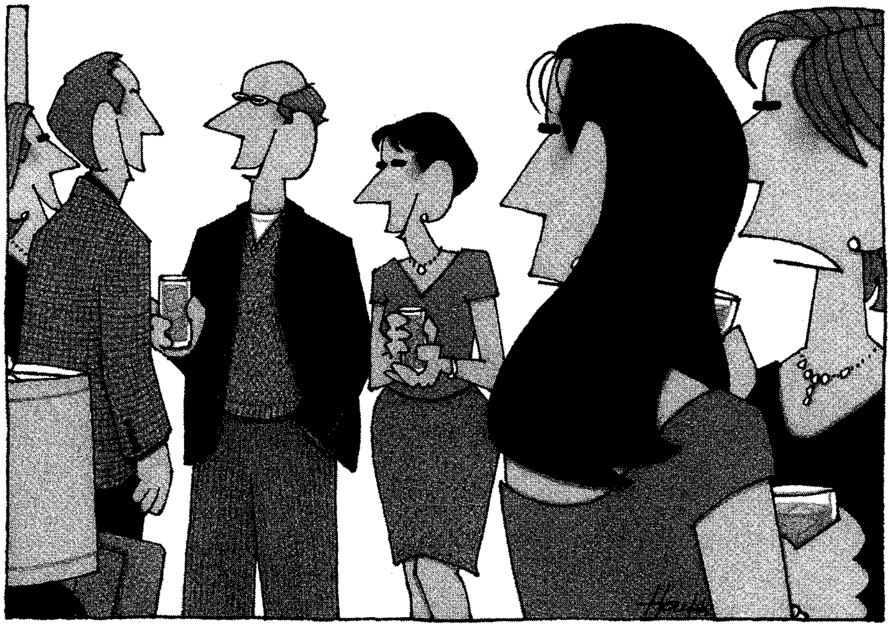
Still, Kozlowski got the job and was happy to leave Nashua Corporation, which was faltering. His wife was pregnant, and they moved to Waltham, a suburb of Boston. The child, a daughter, was followed by a second daughter a few years later.

Gaziano couldn't read a balance sheet, but he was ambitious and loved the trappings of corporate power—he had the use of three houses and a private plane. Shortly after Kozlowski arrived at the company, Tyco bought an I.T.T. subsidiary, Grinnell Fire Protection Systems, which was barely breaking even, and Gaziano made Kozlowski a vice-president of what was now Tyco's largest division. Kozlowski slashed bureaucracy, firing large numbers of people, decentralized decision-making, and bid aggressively on new business. Within six months Grinnell showed a million-dollar profit.

Gaziano was less interested in operations than in acquisitions. Sometimes he barely knew what businesses his targets were in, let alone how he would integrate them into Tyco if his bids succeeded. He was one of the earliest corporate raiders, and among the first to take "greenmail"—multimillion-dollar payments from takeover targets who pay inflated prices to buy their own stock back from a hostile bidder. Gaziano liked to say that acquiring companies was like being infected with a social disease: "The fun is in the getting it." For three years, Kozlowski watched as Gaziano pursued a hostile bid for Ludlow Corporation, a manufacturer of packaging and carpet backing. In 1982, the bid succeeded, but Gaziano died shortly afterward, of cancer. John Fort, another engineer, became Tyco's new C.E.O.

Abstemious almost to a fault, Fort could hardly have been more of a contrast to Gaziano. At Tyco's headquarters in Exeter, the company bought land and built three modest, shingled low-rise office buildings that lacked even a cafeteria. From trees that were felled to clear the land, Fort had the builder set aside the hardwood, which he offered to employees for firewood and used to heat his own home. His company car was an old Chevy. Fort sold the company plane and flew coach, as did Kozlowski and other Tyco executives. Fort was a champion of shareholder value, often declaring, "The reason we were put on earth was to increase earnings per share."

At Grinnell, Kozlowski acquired many of its competitors without drawing antitrust attention. He raised the unit's revenues from $212 million in 1983, when he was named president of the unit, to $700 million in 1987. That year, Kozlowski joined Tyco's board. He was named Tyco's president and chief operating officer in 1989. During these years, he honed the principles that later surfaced in his "Polish grandmother" speech—among them "Only hire people who are smart, poor, and want to be rich" and "Have fun and change your commandments as often as necessary."



*"Very traditional. He's the noun. She's the adjective."*

• •

Kozlowski was now earning nearly a million dollars a year, enough to afford a New Hampshire beach house for his wife and two daughters and expand his wine cellar. In 1987, he paid $250,000 for a fifty-one-foot Baltic sailboat, and joined the Corinthian Yacht Club, in Marblehead, Massachusetts. Shortly before the 1991 recession, he commissioned a $1.5-million racing sloop, putting up a $500,000 down payment. The shipyard went bankrupt before the boat was completed, and Kozlowski never got his money back.

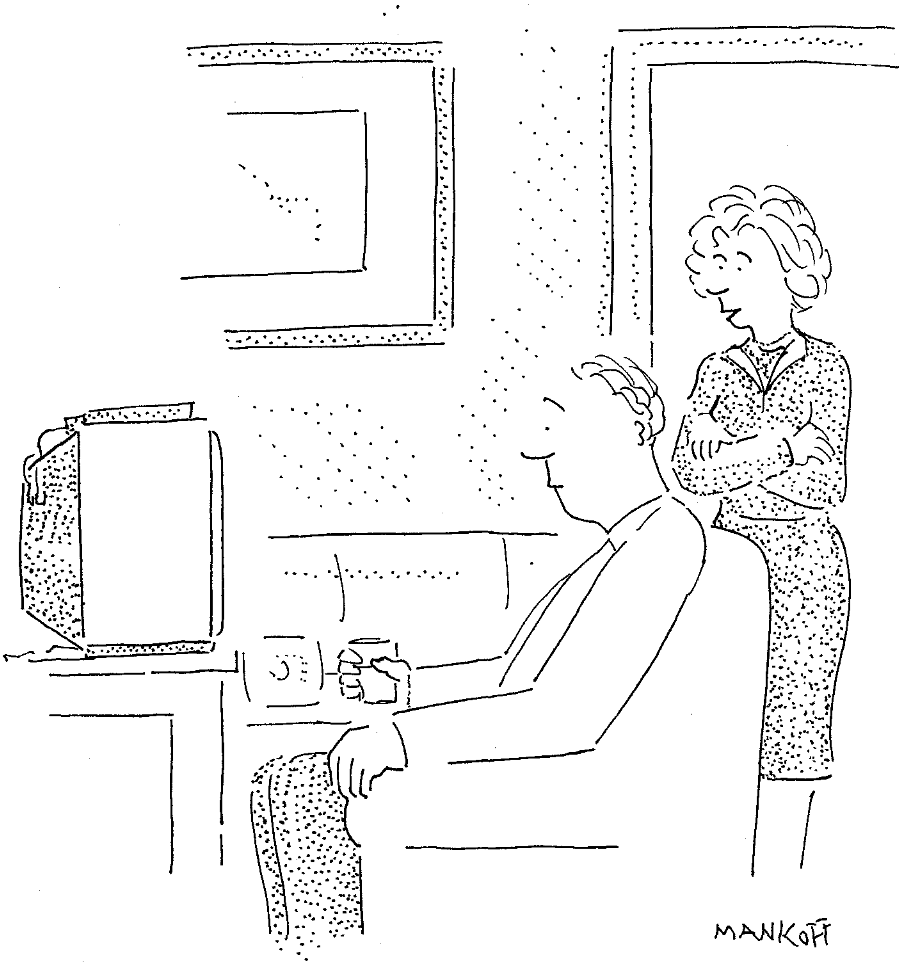
At the Corinthian, Kozlowski met Dan McDougall, the club's commodore, who ran an advertising agency outside Boston. Kozlowski hired McDougall to oversee Tyco's corporate advertising, and they became friends. McDougall also collected art, mostly American Impressionists, and dabbled in art dealing. He entertained often at his home, in Gloucester, and Kozlowski showed a growing interest in his paintings, especially marine art. He was smitten by an 1879 painting by W. G. Yorke of a Maine coastal schooner passing Sandy Hook, New Jersey, which Kozlowski knew from his own sailing, and McDougall agreed to sell it to him for $35,000. Kozlowski bought a painting by another marine artist, W. E. Norton, and asked for McDougall's guidance in acquiring more. Kozlowski also liked Depression-era paintings of street urchins; he told McDougall that he could identify with the subjects of the paintings.

The 1991 recession hurt Tyco's earnings. The company was not as diversified as it seemed. Much of its revenues came from supplying sprinkler systems for the commercial construction industry, which is vulnerable to business cycles, and both earnings and stock price suffered. Fort's reaction was to focus on operating efficiencies in the businesses Tyco already owned, and back off from growth through acquisitions. Kozlowski says he pushed for the opposite course: seize on economic weakness to acquire even more and bigger companies at bargain prices. In 1992, Fort retired, though he remained on the board of directors. Kozlowski was named chairman and C.E.O.

Now fully in charge, Kozlowski revealed a fierce ambition to transform both himself and Tyco, which took some directors by surprise. "One thing we found out after he was C.E.O is that he really had a big pair of balls," a board member says. "By God, he was not afraid of risk. He took risks and he made it work." Kozlowski launched into a deal frenzy that took Tyco shares from $32.38 when he became chairman to a high of nearly twice that in 2001. Kozlowski ultimately owned three million shares and options covering ten million more. With an aggressive incentive-pay plan that closely tied Kozlowski's earnings to Tyco's earnings and cash flow, his own annual compensation went from $950,000 in 1992 to $26 million in 1997, $70 million in 1998, and $137 million in 2000. At an investor conference in 1999, he was asked why he kept working. "The money is a way to keep score," he replied.

When Kozlowski's options vested, enabling him to buy large amounts of Tyco stock at very low prices, he owed income tax on the difference between what he paid for the shares and what they were worth. Kozlowski and other top executives had often emphasized that they were so confident in Tyco's future that they would rarely, if ever, sell their Tyco stock. But how could they pay the taxes on their gains without selling off some of the shares? The Tyco board decided to institute a Key Employee Loan program "to encourage ownership of Company common stock on favorable terms," according to company documents. "Loan proceeds may be used for the payment of federal income taxes due on the vesting of Company common stock," the plan reads. Such loan programs became standard at large corporations as stock prices soared.

No one at Tyco begrudged Kozlowski his income or spent much time wondering what he did with it. He travelled constantly, often from Sunday night until Friday, and worked long hours. He estimates that seventy per cent of his time was spent travelling on business. He was a demanding boss, with a short attention span and scant patience for lengthy meetings. At the same time, he had trouble refusing requests, whether it was someone at a subsidiary asking him to attend a local function or one of his lieutenants asking for a raise. But in the late nineties friends like McDougall saw less and less of him, and when they did see him they felt pressured to get to the point. McDougall thought that he'd never encountered a chief executive who worked harder.



*"Has there ever been a charming rogue state?"*

The company hired a Manhattan-based corporate-image consultant, Robert Dilenschneider, to burnish Kozlowski's image and enhance the company's reputation. Dilenschneider's firm prepared a detailed plan for Kozlowski to emerge as the next Jack Welch, the then much admired chairman of GE. The plan, submitted to Kozlowski in a bound notebook that was still in his office last summer, called for him to give conspicuously to charity, join corporate and charitable boards of directors, and seek out speaking opportunities at such visible venues as the Economic Club of Chicago and the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland.

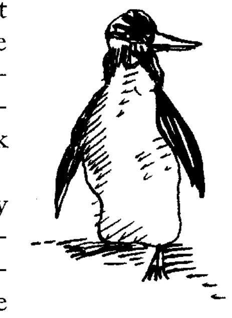
In the course of all this, Kozlowski's marriage deteriorated; by the time he was named chairman, he and his wife had moved into separate houses, though they remained married. He subsequently became involved with Karen Mayo, a waitress at Ron's Beach House, in North Hampton, New Hampshire. The affair became public when Kozlowski and Mayo were shown on national television holding hands at the U.S. Open.

On the surface, little changed at Tyco's headquarters in Exeter, which retained the austere aura of the Fort years. Kozlowski initially seemed every bit as frugal as Fort, declining, at one point, to replace the offices' worn carpeting. But as Tyco's revenues and profits rose Kozlowski began to spend more freely. In 1995, Tyco opened a New York office on Fifth Avenue, and in 2001 moved to 9 West Fifty-seventh Street, a skyscraper with a swooping glass façade. The office has Oriental carpets, antiques, an executive chef, and expansive views of Central Park. The building commands among the highest rents in Manhattan. The renovation of the office cost $7 million, but Kozlowski saw it as an insignificant incremental cost for a company that now had $36 billion in revenues. As he explains it, "We were all about growth. It took thirty-seven million dollars in expenses to affect our earnings by even one cent per share." This became a recurring theme: no matter how expensive in absolute terms, the cost was insignificant as a percentage of Tyco's revenues and profits.

In connection with the move to New York, the compensation committee of Tyco's board approved, according to a company document, a plan to "cover the transfer of applicable employees" as part of a "relocation of the company's corporate headquarters to New York City." Under the program, Kozlowski rented an apartment at 817 Fifth Avenue, and Tyco paid $264,000 in annual rent. But no public announcement that Tyco's U.S. headquarters had moved was ever made, and Kozlowski went to great lengths to maintain the appearance that the headquarters remained in New Hampshire. All calls to Tyco's U.S. headquarters were routed through the Exeter switchboard, and Kozlowski insisted on meeting fund managers, other investors, stock analysts, and reporters in New Hampshire, even if he had to travel there expressly for that purpose.

One of the largest of Kozlowski's acquisitions was ADT Security Services, in 1997, at a cost of $5.6 billion. This gave Tyco ADT's tax-advantaged Bermuda incorporation and its primary U.S. offices, in Boca Raton, Florida. ADT's chief executive was Michael Ashcroft, a self-made, British-born billionaire whose urbane manner and lavish life style made a big impression on Kozlowski. He especially admired Ashcroft's yacht, the Atlantic Goose. Ashcroft joined Tyco's board in 1997, and Kozlowski toasted him after he was made a life peer by Queen Elizabeth in 2000.

In Boca Raton, Tyco expanded ADT's offices, leasing a building and renovating it to include a gym and an executive dining room. After acquiring ADT, Kozlowski had given ADT's employees the choice of staying in Florida or moving to New Hampshire; ninety per cent had chosen to stay in Florida. Kozlowski and Karen Mayo began spending more time there themselves, especially during the winter. Eventually, Kozlowski designated Florida as his primary residence, and Mayo opened a New American-cuisine restaurant, called Zemi, in Boca Raton. Kozlowski bought five adjoining lots in the Sanctuary, a gated community there, and built and furnished a sprawling Spanish-colonial-style house. He financed the purchases with a $30-million interest-free "relocation loan" from Tyco, even though the board never approved a relocation plan for Florida. Kozlowski maintains that since the rationale was the same, he and other employees were entitled to the benefits offered in the New York relocation plan.



In Florida, the company also kept a doctor on the payroll and hired Mayo's personal trainer as a full-time fitness consultant. To facilitate Kozlowski's and other executives' travel among the now far-flung operations, the company owned or leased six aircraft and a helicopter.

Kozlowski, who had been renting a summer place on Nantucket, bought a large shingled house on the island, on Squam Road, in 1997. He financed the purchase through the Key Employee Loan program. An entry in Kozlowski's K.E.L. account dated December 29, 1997, indicates he repaid $5.96 million for "Nantucket property" and borrowed $14,725 for "Nantucket wine cellar."

These expenses seem far removed from any payment of federal tax due on vested stock options, which was the stated purpose of the loan program, but Kozlowski reasoned that he would otherwise have had to sell Tyco stock, which would be publicly disclosed and might shake investor confidence. Thus, he insists he was complying with the spirit of the program. And, in any event, he says he always intended to pay the money back, as he did with the Nantucket loans. This rationale, of course, could be extended to virtually anything Kozlowski bought that he might otherwise pay for by selling Tyco stock.

In 1998, Kozlowski spent millions of dollars on a hundred-and-thirty-foot J-Class sloop called Endeavour, which had been built in the nineteen-thirties for the British industrialist Sir T.O.M. Sopwith and competed in the 1934 America's Cup race. It had a crew of nine, which Kozlowski retained, and a working marble fireplace. The boat was extremely costly to maintain, even for someone with Kozlowski's income, but he saw it as a legitimate business expense, some of which could be charged to Tyco. With the move to New York, the line between Kozlowski's personal interests and Tyco's corporate interests had already blurred, and the use of a yacht to promote Tyco's image seemed justifiable. Tyco has its own racing boat, with which Team Tyco competed in the around-the-world Volvo Ocean Race; the company also reimbursed Kozlowski $110,000 for the use of Endeavour.

Kozlowski had also embarked on a campaign of charitable activities. He and Mayo were active in AIDS charities on Nantucket and in the United Way campaign in New Hampshire, and they chaired a dinner for the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation in New York. People involved in these and other organizations praise Kozlowski's generosity and compassion, especially toward underprivileged children.

He made these contributions out of his own money; Tyco made many other corporate contributions, and three employees evaluated proposals. Though the company gave generously, Kozlowski limited charitable gifts to no more than one per cent per share. Here, too, the line between Kozlowski's personal donations and Tyco's corporate donations blurred. Tyco made contributions to Seton Hall, his alma mater ($1 million); Middlebury College, where he was on the board of trustees ($500,000); Berwick Academy, a Maine prep school attended by his daughters ($300,000); the Shackleton Schools, a Boston-based private institution for youth with disciplinary problems ($200,000); and the Babies & Children's Hospital of New York ($200,000). A million-dollar check toward a $10-million pledge to the America's Cup effort at the California International Sailing Association also came from Tyco, as did $1.3 million in donations to the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, which bought land next to Kozlowski's Squam Road property, thereby limiting development.

Tyco's lawyers ultimately determined that, beginning in 1997, Kozlowski handed out $43 million in personal donations that actually came from Tyco.

## IN NOTRE-DAME

When I go back into the cathedral to check
If the candle I lit for you is still burning,
I encounter Job squatting on his dunghill.
(Can those be cowrie-shell fossils in the stone?
No. Imagine imagining and carving turds
At eye level for our sorry edification!)
Such tiny figures make my own body feel huge
And fleshy and hopeless inside the doorway.
In my voice-box the penitents and pickpockets
Murmuring in hundreds down the aisles find room.
Each mouth is a cathedral for the God-crumbs.
Where is the holy water, the snow water for Job?
All of our eyes are broken rose windows. Look,
Your candle singes the eyelashes of morning.

—*Michael Longley*

Despite the company's success and increasing visibility in the financial community, it had received scant national publicity. But in 1999 Tyco was contacted by a *Barron's* reporter, Jonathan Laing, who interviewed Kozlowski in Tyco's New Hampshire offices. In April, 1999, *Barron's* put Kozlowski on its cover, with the headline "Tyco's Titan: How Dennis Kozlowski Is Creating a Lean, Profitable Giant." Noting that "he grew up in the tough Central Ward of Newark" and "clearly he hasn't forgotten where he came from," the article declared that Tyco "is purposely kept decentralized and lean near to the point of anorexia. . . . Perks for senior management like first-class air travel, country club memberships, fancy severance packages and the like are anathema. Offices are Spartan." This may have been true in New Hampshire, but not in Manhattan or Boca Raton. There was also no mention of the fleet of corporate aircraft.

Although the comparison to Jack Welch had been an explicit goal of the Dilenschneider campaign, and the article was overwhelmingly positive, Kozlowski says he was embarrassed. He felt uncomfortable in the spotlight, and worried that the article heightened public scrutiny. When *Forbes* followed with a cover story in 2000, it showed Kozlowski posing in front of Tyco's corporate helicopter. The photograph angered him, because the helicopter suggested a corporate extravagance that was at odds with the frugal image Tyco wanted to project.

That year, Kozlowski's compensation from Tyco jumped to $137 million, in part because, without consulting the board, he decided to "forgive" a large portion of the company's relocation loans, including $19.4 million he borrowed to buy his house and land in Florida. He also gave special bonuses to top executives to mark Tyco's successful public offering of shares in its TyCom undersea-cable subsidiary and the divestiture of ADT's automobile-auction division. The TyCom bonuses amounted to $76.5 million, of which Kozlowski's own share was $33 million. The ADT bonuses totalled $56 million; his own share of this bonus pool was $25.6 million.

Again, Kozlowski insists that the bonuses, and his forgiven loans, however large, represented a relatively small percentage of the proceeds of deals like ADT Automotive, which sold for $300 million more than its appraised value three years earlier, when it was acquired, or TyCom, which generated a one-time gain of $1.76 billion even after the bonus payments. Still, the bonuses weren't disclosed, either to shareholders or to the board. According to Tyco's lawyers, the ADT bonuses were buried in the company's accounting records as "direct selling costs." Most of the TyCom payments appear as "TyCom offering expenses." Moreover, recipients signed a confidentiality agreement, promising not to reveal the bonuses on pain of forfeiture.

Although Kozlowski was now extraordinarily wealthy, he remained curiously stingy, at least with his own money. "Dennis was always cheap, no matter how much he earned," one Tyco executive who worked closely with him recalls. Beginning in 1998, according to court filings, his expense records indicate that he charged the company for $72,042 in jewelry, $155,067 in clothing, $96,943 in flowers, $52,334 in wine, and $60,427 in club-membership dues. One expense receipt recently obtained by prosecutors is said to show that Kozlowski left a five-thousand-dollar tip on a roughly eight-thousand-dollar tab at Karen Mayo's restaurant. Kozlowski denies this. Other expenses were covered by the Tyco relocation-loan program or the Key Employee Loan program. Account ledgers indicate that Kozlowski used these loans to make substantial payments for Oriental rugs, interior decorating, landscape design and services, wine cellars, a ninety-thousand-dollar automobile, a "yacht stylist," home-fitness equipment, and swimming-pool maintenance. They also reflect unexplained payments of more than a million dollars to Mayo. Kozlowski maintains that, with the exception of loans he forgave, or reclassified to other accounts, he repaid all loans by the end of Tyco's fiscal year. Company records suggest that he repaid only $21.7 million of $61.7 million in relocation loans.

Kozlowski was also generous to other employees. Mark Swartz, the chief financial officer, received more than $21 million in relocation loans, and Kozlowski forgave $9.8 million in loans. Mark Belnick, the general counsel, got a $12-million bonus and used $10.4 million in relocation loans to buy property in Park City, Utah, the ski resort. Kozlowski forgave large loans to a secretary, a corporate party planner, and a human-resources employee, among others. In total, he forgave $56.4 million in relocation loans. And Kozlowski used a $7-million relocation loan to buy an apartment at 610 Park Avenue, which he gave to his wife, Angeles, as part of a divorce settlement that enabled him to marry Karen Mayo, in 2000. (Kozlowski later repaid $5.2 million of the loan and forgave the balance.)

In 2001, Kozlowski was searching for a New York apartment for Tyco to buy rather than rent. He was convinced that high-end Manhattan real estate would continue to appreciate, and thus would be a good investment for the company; it would give him a discreet place for meetings with investment bankers. Tyco was doing so many deals that he worried the stock would be affected every time investment bankers were spotted going into the Tyco offices. But after looking at properties with various real-estate agents, Kozlowski had been rejected by boards at 817 Fifth Avenue and 927 Fifth Avenue. Then Swartz introduced him to Dolly Lenz, a broker at Insignia Douglas Elliman.

Even in a field of cutthroat competition, Lenz was notable. In an article in *Gotham* entitled "Hello, Dolly!," Lenz took credit for representing Barbra Streisand, Mariah Carey, royalty, and heads of state. Kozlowski was initially wary of her aggressiveness, and sometimes referred to her as Jaws, but he let her show him some condominiums and co-ops. Kozlowski liked an apartment at 950 Fifth Avenue, a duplex overlooking the Park. It was owned by Stephen Schwarzman, a prominent investment banker and the president of the Blackstone Group. Lenz said that she knew many of the owners in the building, which had only seven apartments, and that Kozlowski would pass muster with the board. To smooth the board-approval process, Kozlowski spoke with two other apartment owners, Jonathan Tisch, the chief executive of Loews Hotels, part of the Tisch-family-controlled Loews Corporation, and Robert Hurst, a vice-chairman of Goldman, Sachs, one of Tyco's investment-banking firms.

Like many co-ops, 950 Fifth did not allow corporate ownership of any of the apartments, but Kozlowski thought that this wouldn't be a problem: the co-op shares would be held in his name, even if Tyco paid for the apartment.

During Kozlowski's interview with the board, he says that no one asked him who was paying for the apartment, and his application was approved. Tyco subsequently paid $16.8 million for it, and another $3 million in construction costs. Kozlowski chose his Nantucket decorator, Wendy Valliere, for the interiors, in part because she offered to lower her commission on purchases for the apartment. Kozlowski gave her a budget of $5 million, or thirty per cent of the purchase price, which Valliere told him was a rule of thumb for interior decoration. He met with her only two or three times during the project. As for the furniture and antiques she was to acquire, all he said was "Make sure they will hold their value." The project came in $700,000 over budget. Kozlowski loved giving tours of the renovated apartment, showing off what looked like wallpaper patterns but were actually hand-painted designs by two craftsmen from Germany.

Kozlowski saw little of his neighbors, but Hurst invited him to join the board of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Chronically short of money, the Whitney was exactly the kind of institution that Robert Dilenschneider recommended as likely to confer prestige. It was also an opportunity, in Dilenschneider's words, to "network him more deeply into the city." Kozlowski disclaimed any art expertise and told Hurst he brought only a willingness to work. Still, he gave five thousand dollars a year to the museum personally. Tyco, for its part, pledged $4.5 million.

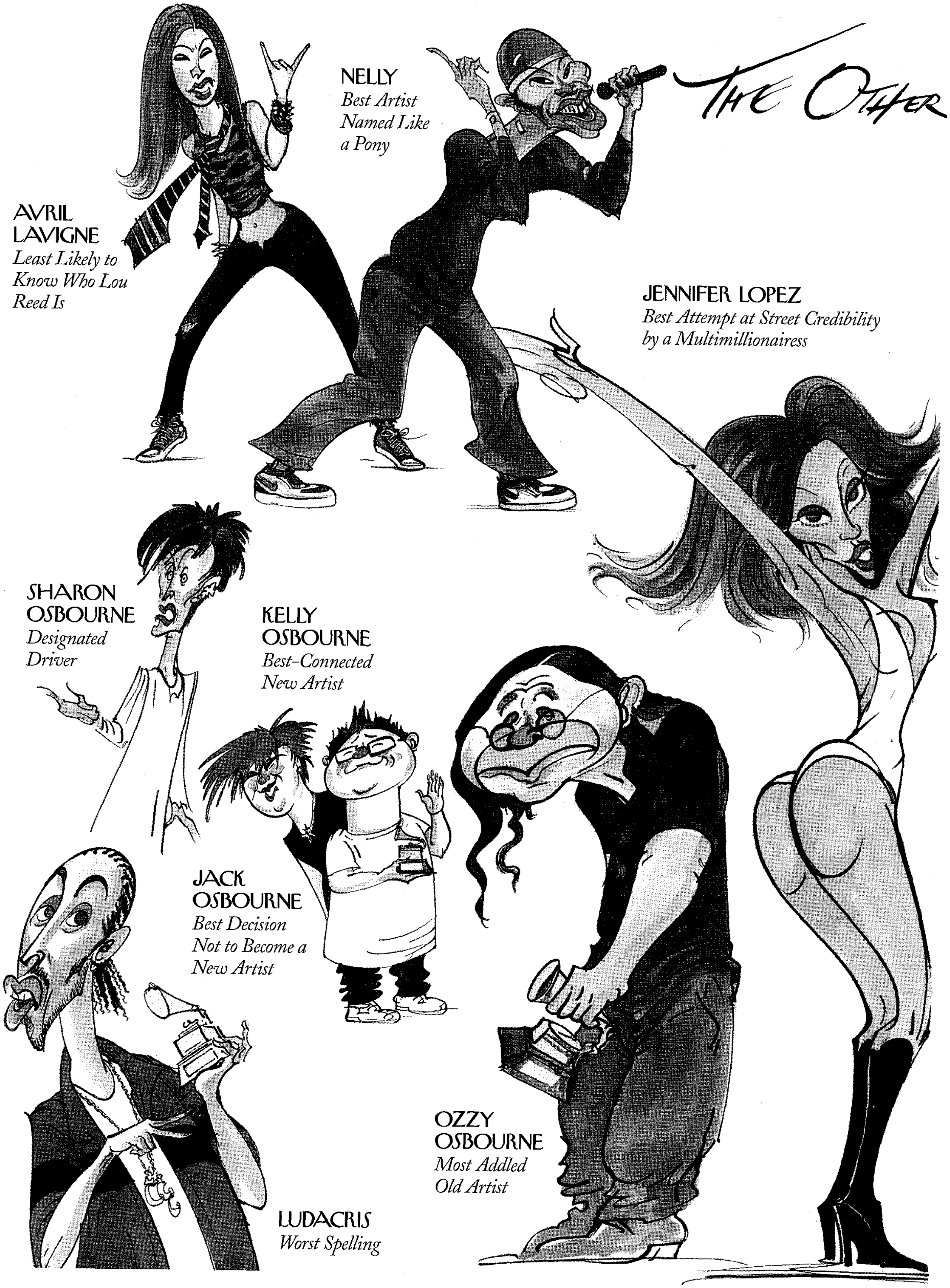
Later that year, Kozlowski's steward on Endeavour introduced him to Mark Lessard, who was in charge of fine-wine sales at a West Palm Beach company, Fine Collections Management. Kozlowski bought two shipments of wine through Lessard—mostly California Chardonnay. Lessard mentioned that Fine Collections could also help Kozlowski acquire art, and introduced him to Christine Berry, the head of Fine Collections' art-advisory program.

Berry impressed Kozlowski as soft-spoken and scholarly. She had a master's degree in art history from the University of North Texas, in Denton, and had worked at the Whitney, where, as an assistant registrar, she handled routine paperwork, such as documents related to works lent to the museum. The following Saturday, Lessard arranged for Kozlowski and Karen Mayo to visit William I. Koch, an heir to the Koch oil-and-gas fortune, at his home in Palm Beach and view his extensive art collection, which includes works by Cézanne, Monet, Winslow Homer, and Frederic Remington. They also toured his wine cellar, custom-built by Austrian stonemasons. Kozlowski and his wife dressed casually for the visit, and seemed dazzled by the Koch estate, which had been featured in an architectural magazine. Lessard was on hand as

Victoria Roberts

*"You know, Margaret, a lot of people who can knit don't."*

# THE OTHER



**AVRIL LAVIGNE**
*Least Likely to Know Who Lou Reed Is*

**NELLY**
*Best Artist Named Like a Pony*

**JENNIFER LOPEZ**
*Best Attempt at Street Credibility by a Multimillionairess*

**SHARON OSBOURNE**
*Designated Driver*

**KELLY OSBOURNE**
*Best-Connected New Artist*

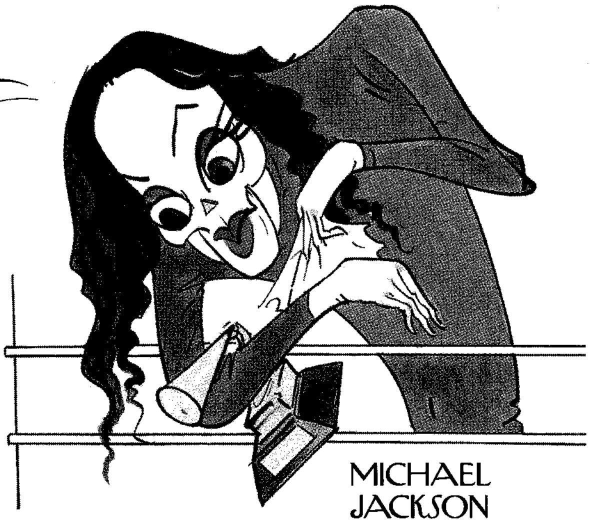
**JACK OSBOURNE**
*Best Decision Not to Become a New Artist*

**OZZY OSBOURNE**
*Most Addled Old Artist*

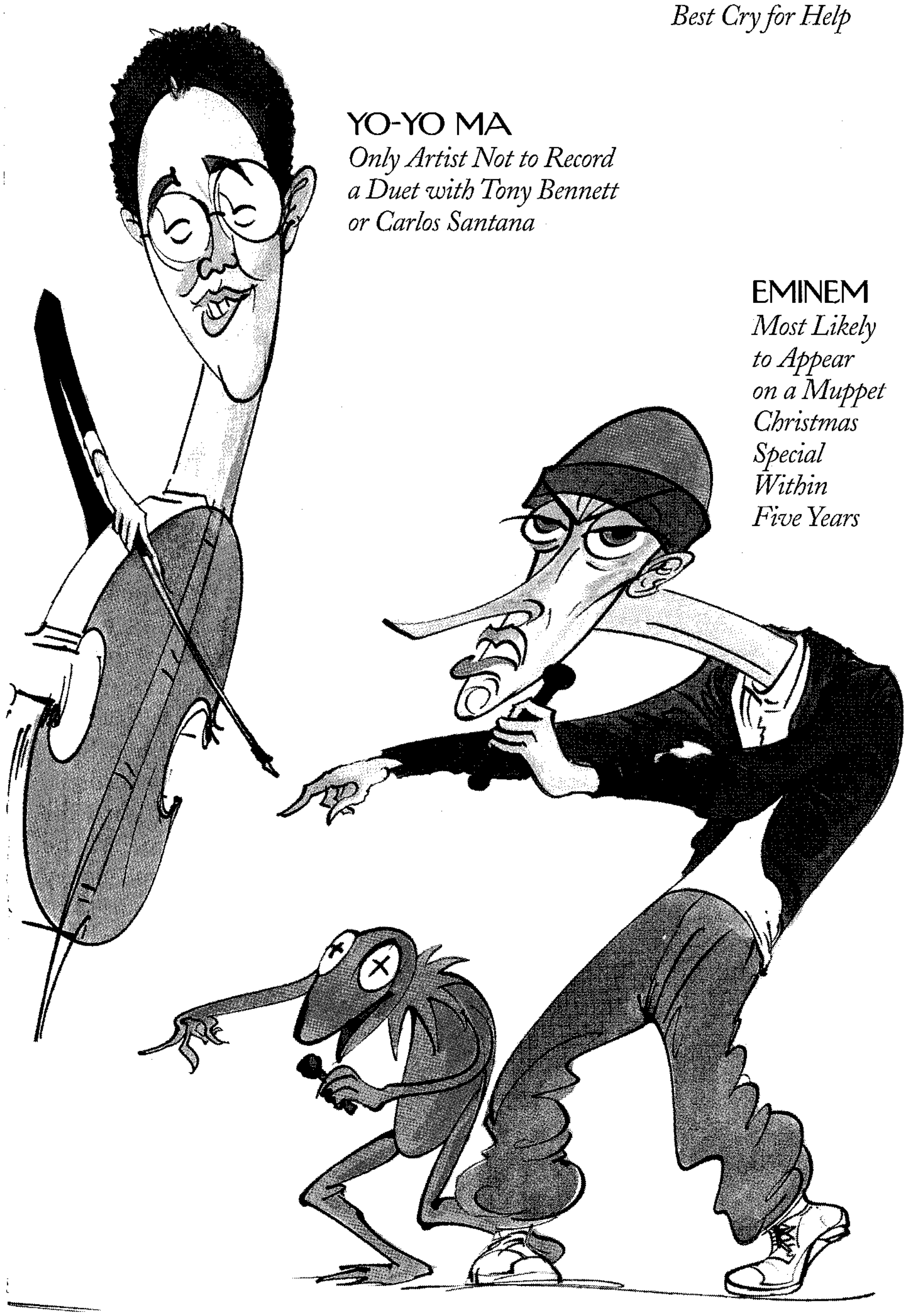
**LUDACRIS**
*Worst Spelling*

# Grammys

BY GERALD SCARFE
AND ANDY BOROWITZ



**MICHAEL JACKSON**
*Best Cry for Help*



**YO-YO MA**
*Only Artist Not to Record a Duet with Tony Bennett or Carlos Santana*

**EMINEM**
*Most Likely to Appear on a Muppet Christmas Special Within Five Years*

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well. No one mentioned that Koch had provided the capital to start Fine Collections and partly owned the business, or that Berry was not his art adviser. Koch was an expert collector and made all his own decisions, which, he now says, he assumed Kozlowski knew.

Over a bottle of white Burgundy, a 1985 Montrachet, Kozlowski indicated that he'd like to expand his art collection, and Koch recalls offering some advice: "Don't buy something because someone recommends it. Buy it because you love it."

Christine Berry began sending Kozlowski slides and photographs of various works, and that summer, in London, the Kozlowskis and Berry went to the Richard Green Gallery, on New Bond Street, one of London's largest dealers, where they met with Penny Marks, Richard Green's sister. Kozlowski and Mayo admired several paintings, including a fall landscape by the English artist Atkinson Grimshaw; a painting of a horse and groom by Sir Alfred Munnings, a noted British equestrian painter; and a romantic work by Adolphe-William Bouguereau. Berry handled the negotiations, and eventually Kozlowski bought the three works for nearly $2 million. He was impressed, he says, that Berry was able to talk the gallery down in price, more than earning her eight-per-cent commission.

Although the paintings were destined for the Kozlowskis' apartment on Fifth Avenue, they were flown to Newark, trucked to Exeter, where Kozlowski's secretary signed for them, and delivered to New York City the next day. No New York sales tax was paid. (Because the Richard Green Gallery does business in New York, it is required to withhold sales tax on goods destined for New York.)

That fall, Berry again got in touch with Kozlowski, telling him that representatives of the Richard Green Gallery were going to be in Florida and could bring some paintings to his house in Boca Raton. Penny Marks arrived one afternoon with about twenty paintings, which she had her associates uncrate in Kozlowski's living room. There was an array of Old Master and European Impressionist works, including paintings by Sisley, Caillebotte, Fantin-Latour, and Renoir. These artists represented a major leap for Kozlowski in both quality and

*"Uh-oh, Justin Legoed himself into his room again."*

• •

price. He felt he needed art for his large new homes in both Florida and New York, and to an extent he felt obligated to buy something, given the trouble that Marks was going to. He also admired several of the paintings, especially a Renoir still-life, "Fleurs et Fruits." But the price, $5.5 million, gave him pause.

According to Kozlowski, Berry explained that he needed some "flagship" paintings that would establish his reputation as a serious collector. This would in turn enhance the "provenance" of any work he acquired, and thereby raise the value of all his works. She felt that the Renoir and the other paintings were fairly priced and would be "money well spent."

Kozlowski recalls asking, "If I sold tomorrow, would I do as well or better at auction? Or would I be leaving money on the table?"

Berry's response, according to Kozlowski, was to assure him that, at a minimum, he'd "break even."

In a statement issued by Berry's lawyer, Alan S. Futerfas, she says, "The idea that I would tell someone they need a 'flagship' painting is ridiculous." According to her, it was Kozlowski who "was interested in buying works of art by extremely prestigious artists." She insists that she never encouraged him to buy paintings he didn't want. ("We will not act as a sounding board for Mr. Kozlowski's defense ideas and respond to every false assertion," Futerfas says. "Ms. Berry looks forward, if called, to testifying about what actually occurred.")

In any case, Kozlowski couldn't make up his mind. One of his favorite adages from his Polish grandmother was "If there is ever the slightest bit of doubt, don't get married," and he had often invoked it to reject a proposed takeover candidate. But in December Berry called again, urging him, as he recalls it, to "rush over" to an apartment just two blocks away on Fifth Avenue. When he arrived, Berry was there, along with Alexander Apsis, the apartment owner and the seller of a Monet seascape, "Près Monte Carlo," showing a view of the Mediterranean off Cap Martin. Kozlowski was captivated by it, because he had sailed there.

By the next day, Berry had got Apsis to drop his price from $4.5 to $4 million. Kozlowski refused to pay more than $3.95 million. With just fifty thousand dollars separating them, Kozlowski says Apsis agreed to the lower price provided the deal closed in January, presumably for tax reasons. The invoice for the purchase, dated December 14th and sent to Kozlowski in care of Fine Collections in West Palm Beach, contained this caveat: "Sales tax is not applicable as the painting is being sent to New Hampshire. Proof of shipment will be required."

Kozlowski's doubts about the other works seemed to vanish. Berry quickly negotiated the purchase of the Renoir for $4.7 million, about fifteen per cent less than the asking price, as well as three other works: an Impressionist landscape by Caillebotte for $1.3 million (asking price: $1.6 million); a Dutch Old Master still-life for $2 million (asking price: $2.6 million); and a hunting scene by Munnings for $800,000 (asking price: $1 million)—a total of $8.8 million. Berry's lawyer maintains that Kozlowski was in such a rush to get the paintings that he "flatly rejected" her offer to compare prices for similar works. Fine Collections took a $704,000 fee, in addition to the $316,000 for the Monet. After the transactions, Berry herself received a "gift" of $10,000 from the Green Gallery, which she didn't disclose to Kozlowski or report to Fine Collections.

The paintings were intended for Kozlowski's home. Nonetheless, he paid for all of them with Tyco's money in the form of interest-free loans from the K.E.L. program, since otherwise he would have had to sell Tyco stock. (He says he repaid the loans by the end of January.)

Two months after hanging the paintings in his apartment, Kozlowski suffered an attack of buyer's remorse. He rarely entertained at the apartment, and few people would see them. He says he felt guilty about paying so much. Perhaps he had a premonition. He called Berry and asked if she could sell them "quickly and quietly." She said she didn't think it would be a problem; she'd ask some clients in Palm Beach. A month later, he called again. She was "looking into it," she said, but he sensed a certain coolness in her voice.

Had Kozlowski done the due diligence used for any of his corporate acquisitions, he would have known that the paintings probably could not be quickly resold for anything close to what he'd paid for them. Three of the paintings had been acquired at auction in recent years by the Richard Green Gallery for far lower prices than Kozlowski paid: the $4.7-million Renoir had gone for $3.6 million; the $1.3-million Caillebotte for around $800,000; and the $800,000 Munnings for less than $500,000.

The summer that Kozlowski visited the Richard Green Gallery in London was also Mayo's fortieth birthday, and in anticipation Kozlowski had mentioned to Barry Sternlicht, the chief executive of Starwood Hotels, that he wanted to throw a birthday party for her in an exotic location. Kozlowski had been a Starwood director, and Sternlicht suggested that he consider the Hotel Cala di Volpe, in Sardinia, one of the company's luxury resort properties in the Mediterranean. Kozlowski was planning to spend most of that July in Europe, attending the Paris air show and visiting European customers of Tyco's electronics division. He had no trouble construing the birthday party for his wife as partly a business function.

That spring, the invitations went out:

*Ottima Festa*
*Ottimi Amici*

Our summer party is moving from Nantucket to Sardinia. Please join us in the celebration of friendships and Karen's 40th birthday in the scenic Costa Smeralda.

Accommodations have been arranged at the Hotel Cala di Volpe Resort. We look forward to seeing you there—the fun begins the evening of June 10th.

*Buon viaggio e felice arrivo—a presto!*
Karen & Dennis

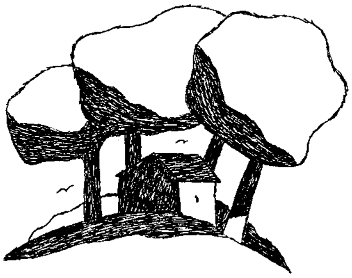
The best present for my birthday is your company so please, no gifts.

The invitation hardly prepared guests for what awaited them. The planned festivities were described in an e-mail dated April 23rd from a Tyco employee to its corporate event coördinator, Barbara Jacques:

Guests arrive at the club starting at 7:15 p.m. The van pulls up to the main entrance. Two gladiators are standing next to the door, one opens the door, the other helps the guests. We have a lion or horse with a chariot for shock value. The guests proceed through the two rooms. We have gladiators standing guard every couple feet and they are lining the way. The guests come into the pool area, the band is playing, they are dressed in elegant chic. Big ice sculpture of David, lots of shellfish and caviar at his feet. A waiter is pouring Stoli vodka into his back so it comes out his penis into a crystal glass. Waiters are passing cocktails in chalices. They are dressed in linen togas with fig wreath on head. A full bar with fabulous linens. The pool has floating candles and flowers. We have rented fig trees with tiny lights everywhere to fill some space. 8:30 the waiters instruct that dinner is served. We all walk up to the loggia. The tables are all family style with the main table in front. The tables have incredible linens with chalices as wineglasses. The food is brought out course by course, family style, lots of wine, and it's starting to get dark. Everyone is nicely buzzed, LDK [L. Dennis Kozlowski] gets up and has a toast for K [Karen].

Everyone is jumping from table to table. E Cliff has continued to play light music through dinner. They kick it up a bit. We start the show of pictures on the screen, great background music in sync with the slides. At the end Elvis is on the screen wishing K a Happy Birthday and apologizing that he could not make it. It starts to fade and Elvis is on stage and starts singing happy birthday with the Swingdogs [a Nantucket band often hired for Tyco events]. A huge cake is brought out with the waiters in togas singing and holding the cake up for all to see. The tits explode. Elvis kicks it in full throttle. Waiters are passing wine, after dinner drinks, and there is dancing. 11:30 light show starts. HBK [Happy Birthday Karen] is displayed on mountain, fireworks coming from both ends of the golf course in sync with music. Swingdogs start up and the night is young.

Among the sixty or so guests were a number of Tyco executives and directors and their spouses, including Mark Swartz, Barbara Jacques, and Lord Ashcroft. Also on the list were Dan McDougall, the decorator Wendy Valliere, and the Endeavour crew. Some guests were initially puzzled by the invitation. They barely knew Karen Mayo and rarely socialized with Kozlowski. The timing of the party was also awkward. Tyco had recently completed a $9-billion acquisition of the CIT Group, a large financial-services company, and, in keeping with Tyco's strategy of sharply cutting costs at the companies it acquired, Tyco planned to announce the termination of numerous CIT employees the same day as the party.



When Michael Robinson, Tyco's treasurer, said he didn't think he could make it to the party, he was pressured to attend. One of the company jets was assigned to fly him to Sardinia. Upon boarding the plane, Robinson saw that Kozlowski's daughter was on board, along with her boyfriend. It occurred to Robinson that he was the business excuse for using the Tyco jet and that the cost of the trip could therefore be charged to the company. (Robinson returned the next day on a commercial flight.) Several other executives were also asked to attend, though not all of them did. They were told that their presence would "help Dennis out."

Reaction to the party ranged from enthusiasm to embarrassment. A videotape of the event dwells on guests squealing over the anatomically detailed, vodka-spouting David and the moment that the breasts on the birthday cake, shaped like a life-size female nude, did in fact explode. No one denied that the event was memorable.

Kozlowski says he volunteered to pay for a portion of the party's expenses out of his own funds, "whatever was fair." Only later did the Tyco executives learn that Kozlowski was reimbursed based on a formula—a ratio of Tyco executives and directors to other party guests—for allocating a share of the costs to Tyco. According to court records filed this past fall, Tyco paid for "more than $1 million" of the party's cost of $2.1 million.

Not long after the Monet and the Renoir were delivered to Kozlowski's Manhattan apartment, in January, 2002, New York State banking authorities referred an investigation of suspected money laundering to Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau. The case focussed on an account into which millions of dollars were being deposited before being wired to offshore accounts. The pattern looked particularly suspicious because the account address, an exclusive building at 930 Fifth Avenue, was supposed to be strictly residential. The account belonged to Alexander Apsis.

Morgenthau handed the case over to one of his senior investigators, John Moscow. Moscow subpoenaed Apsis's account statements, books, invoices, and shipping records. He learned that the former Sotheby's curator worked as a self-styled "art expert," advising clients, often acting as an agent for buyers and sellers. Despite the large cash flow, Moscow found no evidence of any money laundering.

But the statement "Sales tax is not applicable" on the copy of the invoice sent to Kozlowski for the Monet painting leaped out. Moscow's investigators soon learned that the painting had never gone to New Hampshire but had been moved two blocks uptown. Moscow had just been handed a high-profile investigation of one of America's top corporate executives.

At about the same time, in December, 2001, Kozlowski had been reviewing a draft of Tyco's annual proxy statement, which disclosed that a Tyco director, Frank Walsh—the former chairman of Wesray Capital, the hugely successful leveraged-buyout firm—had been paid a $20-million "finder's fee" for helping bring about Tyco's acquisition of CIT earlier that year. (All payments of more than sixty thousand dollars to directors must be publicly disclosed.) Walsh had first suggested that Tyco acquire a finance arm, and had then introduced Kozlowski to CIT's chairman, which ultimately led to Tyco's $9-billion acquisition of the company. Kozlowski felt that the CIT deal was a "home run" for Tyco, and that it wouldn't have happened without Walsh, but he was having second thoughts about the payment. Indeed, Kozlowski had agreed to the fee only after Walsh promised to give half of it to charity.

But now, in the wake of Enron and other corporate scandals, Kozlowski wondered if the payment would be interpreted as self-dealing by a director, and render his own involvement as suspect. He'd never mentioned it to the other directors, but now he had Mark Swartz, the chief financial officer, call a board member named Joshua Berman, a lawyer, and read him the paragraph about the payment. Berman recalls that the information left him speechless.

Within an hour, Berman was in Kozlowski's office on West Fifty-seventh Street. He said it was "a blatant conflict of interest," and "unheard of" for a director to propose, advocate, and vote on a deal from which he expected a fee. Berman had ordered a search for other reported instances of a director receiving a fee of this magnitude. He found none. This was also likely to be a public-relations disaster, which Tyco could ill afford. "I screwed up," Kozlowski conceded. "We've got to fix this."

*"He just came through a nasty engagement."*

"Get the money back," Berman said, offering to speak to Walsh himself. When he did, Walsh maintained that it was Kozlowski who had said, "I suppose you'll want a fee," adding that they had been told that a $20-million fee wasn't "material" in the context of a $9-billion deal, so it didn't have to be disclosed. "Why do you need it?" Berman asked. (Walsh was already a wealthy man.) "Everybody would be better off if we just undid it."

Over the next week, various board members urged Walsh to return the fee. (Walsh maintained that some board members told him to stand his ground.) Kozlowski thought he was on the verge of returning it, but then he balked. Walsh argued, according to Kozlowski, "I deserve this fee. If I give it back, it looks like I did something wrong. How could I look myself in the eye in the mirror each morning?"

"Perception, perception, perception," Kozlowski says he replied. "This will go down badly. The world has changed." But Walsh wouldn't budge. The matter was added to the agenda of a January 16th board meeting in Boca Raton that had already been called to discuss a radical new plan Kozlowski was proposing for Tyco.

After a decade of promoting spectacular growth through acquisitions, Kozlowski had suddenly embraced a plan orchestrated by investment bankers at Goldman Sachs to break up Tyco into four separate companies and thereby "unlock" shareholder value. At the end of 2001, the price of Tyco shares was $58, about where it had begun the year, bringing an end to the decade of dramatic price increases that had propelled the value of Kozlowski's options. Still, Tyco had done much better than many other high-growth companies in a year when the Nasdaq index dropped more than seventeen per cent.

Tyco directors, executives, and friends like Dan McDougall say it is hard to overestimate the effect the stagnant stock price had on Kozlowski. The fact that he was "making shareholders rich" and that Tyco's profit and revenues were surging had long been both the business rationale and the moral underpinning of Kozlowski and Tyco's spending and compensation policies. As Kozlowski had said in countless speeches, he believed in rewarding management performance. But, when that performance faltered, then what? He didn't even know exactly what his real-estate and other fixed expenses were per year, but he did know, as he put it, that his life style "had become awfully expensive."

In 2001, for example, Kozlowski had received grants of stock worth more than $50 per share, and roughly half of that was immediately due in tax. If the stock price dropped, he not only made no money on the stock but stood to suffer a substantial after-tax loss if the stock price fell into the twenties. Moreover, most of the directors had chosen to receive their $75,000 annual director's fee in Tyco stock options, so they, too, wanted the stock to rise. Kozlowski concedes that he felt intense pressure to get the stock price up. "We said, 'Let's live or die by the stock price,' " Kozlowski says, "and we did. Management created its own pressure. But this is what shareholders were clamoring for, too." So when investment bankers at Goldman, Sachs gave Kozlowski an analysis that valued the parts of Tyco in a range of $127 billion to $148 billion, or $65 to $75 a share, he leaped at the breakup plan. CIT alone, they argued, was worth between $13 billion to $17 billion. (Goldman, Sachs stood to earn a large portion of an estimated $240 million in fees from the breakup.)

The January 16th meeting was the board's first at the offices in Boca Raton, which had a fitness center, executive dining facilities, and a palm-lined driveway. Some directors were upset by what they saw. "It was ridiculous," one director says. "It was overdone, lavish. It didn't look like an office. It looked like a luxury hotel." When Lord Ashcroft greeted Kozlowski, he said, "Dennis, you've been a naughty boy."

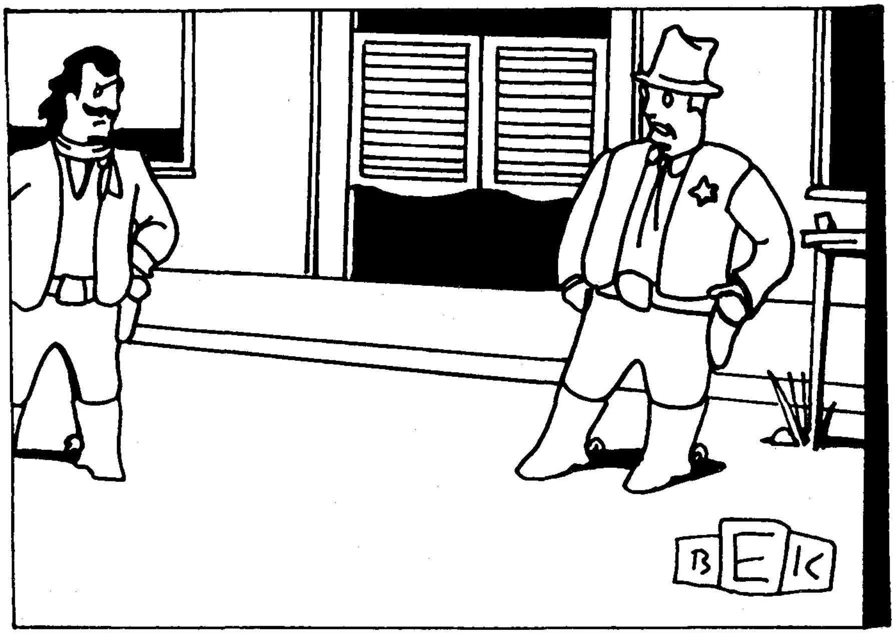
Before the meeting began, Berman again confronted Walsh. "Let me be absolutely clear," he told his fellow-director. "What you did was wrong. Even if it had been disclosed, it was wrong. Think about your position."

The board spent most of the day discussing the breakup plan, reaching no decision. Then Kozlowski gave Walsh an opportunity to speak. "I think I contributed a lot and the amount I got was low," compared with what investment bankers got, Walsh said. "I'm entitled to it." He was excused, and the director Richard Bodman spoke. He said that Walsh had "betrayed" members of the board. Berman was dispatched to break the news of the board's vote: "It was unanimous" that Walsh return the money, Berman told him. "And I mean unanimous." Walsh called his wife, then walked back to the room and gathered his papers. "Adios," he said, and walked out. He and his wife did not show up that evening for the directors' dinner at Kozlowski's house.

Just two days later, Kozlowski called an emergency board meeting for Sunday in Bermuda to approve the breakup plan, saying the directors had to act immediately. Perhaps distracted by the Walsh issue, no one on the board had raised serious questions about whether the Goldman, Sachs valuations were realistic, or how Tyco's abrupt change in corporate strategy might be perceived in a market that was already on tenterhooks in the wake of a succession of corporate scandals. Though some directors worried that Kozlowski was moving too fast, they backed the plan, and news of the breakup was announced the morning of January 21st. Kozlowski and other Tyco executives eagerly awaited the opening of the market, expecting Tyco's shares to soar. Instead, after a brief rally, investors assumed that such a radical, sudden change had to have been motivated by the kind of accounting irregularities that had felled Enron, and the shares soon started to slide.

In this environment, the timing of the proxy statement disclosing the Walsh payment, which was made public on January 29th, couldn't have been worse. As the directors had feared, there was a heated public reaction. The stock plunged more than eight dollars that day alone. By February 6th, Tyco stock had dropped more than fifty per cent, to $25 a share. Kozlowski was stunned by the market's reaction. No one would listen to the breakup valuations; he felt that the market was in the grip of an irrational panic. On April 25th, Tyco called off the ill-fated breakup plan, but to no avail. By the end of April, Tyco shares were at $18. (When CIT was finally divested by Tyco, last year, it brought not the $13 billion to $17 billion that Goldman, Sachs had estimated but $4.6 billion—barely half of what Tyco had paid for it.)

The directors were also shocked by the reaction to the Walsh disclo-



*"To be on the safe side, let's just say 'noonish.' "*

MARISA ACOCELLA

*"Botox."*

• •

sure. Suddenly, Tyco board membership was perceived as a business and social liability. One director complained to Kozlowski, "I'm being embarrassed at my country club." Several directors demanded that Tyco sue Walsh to get the money back. Kozlowski had done nothing to stop them when they ousted Walsh from the board, but now he drew the line. "If you go after Frank, you're going after me," Kozlowski insisted. The issue was discussed, but no immediate action was taken.

The board also began to see Kozlowski in a harsh new light. As the stock plunged, the man they knew as impulsive, decisive, and a confident risktaker now seemed paralyzed. "He was frozen," one director recalls. "He was afraid to change direction. He was not leading."

As rumors of accounting fraud circulated, the board's corporate-governance committee—Joshua Berman, Lord Ashcroft, Richard Bodman, and John Fort—undertook an extensive review of Tyco's books and compensation practices. Unknown to Kozlowski, the four had already virtually concluded that he had to be replaced; the only question was when. The board asked the chief financial officer, Mark Swartz, for records detailing, among other things, the company's charitable contributions, loans to and stock transactions involving top management, and use of company-owned apartments and planes. Increasingly suspicious, the board also hired an outside law firm, Boies, Schiller & Flexner, to investigate the same matters. When Berman spoke with David Boies, the mood was grim. Berman described the circumstances of the Walsh payment, and added that the directors had become suspicious of Kozlowski himself.

By May, when Kozlowski received his grand-jury subpoena, his relations with the board were tense and rapidly deteriorating. Even as he was hiring Stephen Kaufman as his personal lawyer, he was reluctant to tell the Tyco board about the subpoena. Nor was he told that he was the target of the investigation; he thought it was an inquiry into the Monet painting's provenance. He hoped that somehow his lawyers would "make it go away." This, in any event, is what he told Bill Koch after Fine Collections Management received its own subpoena, on May 10th. Over the phone, Koch read Kozlowski the text, which called for the production of all documents related to "dealings with L. Dennis Kozlowski," Alexander Apsis, and the Richard Green Gallery.

"They're just checking into the legal title" of the Monet, Kozlowski said. "My lawyers will take care of it."

Koch was dubious. "Dennis, it looks like they're after you for tax reasons," he said.

Koch was worried about bad publicity, and says he was shocked when he saw the shipping invoices and the handwritten memo from Christine Berry with the notation "wink, wink." As he put it, "If you're going to do something illegal, you don't say 'wink, wink.' "

After Berry, too, was subpoenaed in the sales-tax case against Kozlowski, Koch said he would stand behind her, get her a lawyer, and pay her legal expenses. But "don't lie," he instructed. "Tell the truth, no matter who it hurts. We're turning over the documents as they are and we're not altering anything. It's not worth lying over."

In her testimony, Berry stated that in their phone conversation on the day Kozlowski received the first subpoena, he said, "I guess I owe sales tax," and Berry replied, "I think you do." She also testified that Kozlowski had told her to have empty boxes shipped to New Hampshire. Kozlowski denies mentioning sales tax to Berry and giving orders to ship the boxes.

On Friday, May 31st, at 7:30 P.M., Kozlowski learned from his lawyer that he was going to be indicted for nonpayment of sales tax. From his office, he began calling his directors. Kozlowski felt that they were supportive; several said they would stand by him. But by Saturday evening they were unanimously demanding his resignation. Kozlowski agreed to step down, but only after the board had assured him it would consider paying his salary and give him access to company planes, cars, and the New York apartment—in other words, treat him as a respected former chairman. At one-thirty in the morning on Monday, June 3rd, the board conferred by phone and accepted his resignation. John Fort, Kozlowski's predecessor, became Tyco's interim chief executive. One of his first measures was to dismantle the fleet of corporate planes and repossess Kozlowski's cars.

By September, the lawyers from the Boies firm had completed their investigation, which went far beyond the Walsh payment or the issue of unpaid sales tax. Based on their findings, on September 17th Tyco filed a report with the Securities and Exchange Commission concluding that Kozlowski, Mark Swartz, and the general counsel, Mark Belnick, "engaged in a pattern of improper and illegal conduct by which they enriched themselves at the expense of the company with no colorable benefit to the company and concealed their conduct from the board." In an accompanying civil suit against the three, Tyco accused Kozlowski of an "egregious violation of the trust reposed in him by the Board and its shareholders." Tyco said the total amount of damages caused by Kozlowski "is not yet known," but it asked for repayment of all compensation and benefits since at least 1997, as well as more than $100 million that he allegedly misappropriated—a total of more than $400 million. And, based on substantially the same facts, the Manhattan District Attorney filed another indictment, accusing Kozlowski and Swartz of transforming Tyco into a "criminal enterprise" for their own enrichment. Last week, Belnick was indicted again, on charges of grand larceny, for allegedly stealing more than $12 million in unapproved bonus payments. All three have pleaded not guilty.

Tyco's S.E.C. filing revealed that among the invoices from Wendy Valliere, the Nantucket interior decorator, paid by Tyco were $15,000 for a "dog umbrella stand"; $6,300 for a sewing basket; $17,100 for a "traveling toilette box"; $2,200 for a gilt wastebasket; two sets of sheets for $5,960; and $6,000 for a shower curtain.

The press leaped on these revelations; the *News* called Kozlowski the "Tyco Pig." "It was horrible," he told me. "I felt like I was reading about a person I didn't know. I didn't recognize myself." He said that he had never realized he owned a dog umbrella stand or other such high-priced objects, and he had got Valliere on the phone and demanded an explanation. She insisted that most of the items were antiques, well worth the price and a good investment. And the notorious shower curtain was not a curtain at all but an upholstered partition used to screen off an antiquated servant's bath. She argued that the partition had actually saved money, by making it unnecessary to replace two dilapidated windows. Valliere told the *Wall Street Journal*, "It's not just some stupid dog umbrella stand. It's a very unique, beautiful piece." She said the items were "perfectly normal accoutrements" in a Manhattan luxury apartment, and "I was hired to do a job, and I did a beautiful job."

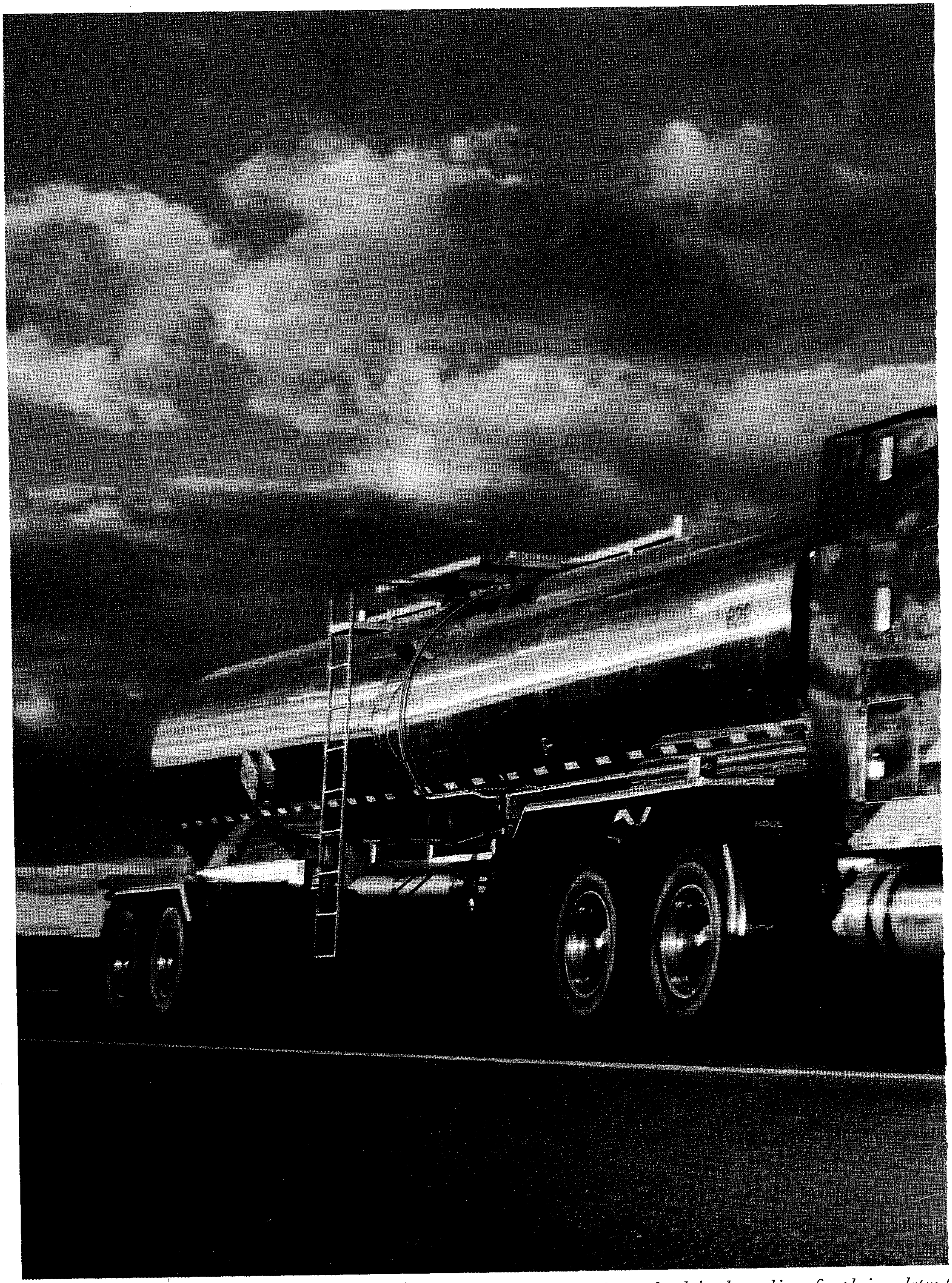
Kozlowski's trial on the conspiracy and fraud charges is scheduled for this June; trial on the tax-avoidance charges will begin after the first trial ends. On the conspiracy and fraud charges, Kozlowski faces fifteen to thirty years in prison and forfeiture of up to $600 million.

In December, Frank Walsh pleaded guilty to failing to disclose his $20-million fee to the board. Walsh told one friend, "I feel I've lived through the French Revolution of corporate governance." He agreed to repay the fee and a $2.5-million fine but was spared a prison term. Fine Collections Management no longer exists; Bill Koch dissolved it after concluding that it had turned into "a bloody nuisance," as he puts it. Christine Berry is expected to testify under a grant of immunity. It's not yet clear whether Penny Marks or anyone from the Richard Green Gallery will testify. For the first time in many years, the gallery did not show up last month at the Winter Antiques Show in New York. The gallery also withdrew from the Palm Beach International Art and Antique Fair.

Whether or not Kozlowski is ultimately acquitted, the fact remains that the richer he became, and the less he actually needed Tyco's money, the more he felt entitled to take it. He may simply have become the most visible example of something that was epidemic in the bull market: a chief executive who couldn't separate himself from the company he ran, the corporate equivalent of "*L'état c'est moi.*"

Since his indictment, Kozlowski's assets have been frozen; he has been granted a fourteen-thousand-dollar-per-month allowance by the New York Supreme Court overseeing his case. Among Kozlowski's assets subject to the court's freeze is the Monet painting, which still hangs in the Manhattan apartment, now a Tyco property, from which Kozlowski is barred. He hasn't seen the Monet since June, and says, "I wish I'd never laid eyes on it."

Despite Kozlowski's extravagance, there is an important distinction between Tyco and other corporate scandals. Unlike Enron, Global Crossing, WorldCom, and Adelphia, Tyco has not turned out, so far, to be another massive corporate-accounting fraud. Though the company remains under investigation by the S.E.C., the Boies firm recently concluded that Tyco's accounting, though aggressive, generally conformed to accepted accounting principles and required only a relatively modest restatement of earnings (about $380 million). Tyco's accountants, PricewaterhouseCoopers, have vigorously defended the integrity of the firm's audits. Tyco has new senior management and will soon have an entirely new board of directors, led by Edward Breen, a respected former Motorola executive. The company avoided bankruptcy and has moved quickly to stabilize its financial structure. As of last week, my thousand shares of stock, after rising from $40,590 to $63,210 and then dropping to $6,980, were worth $15,750. ♦



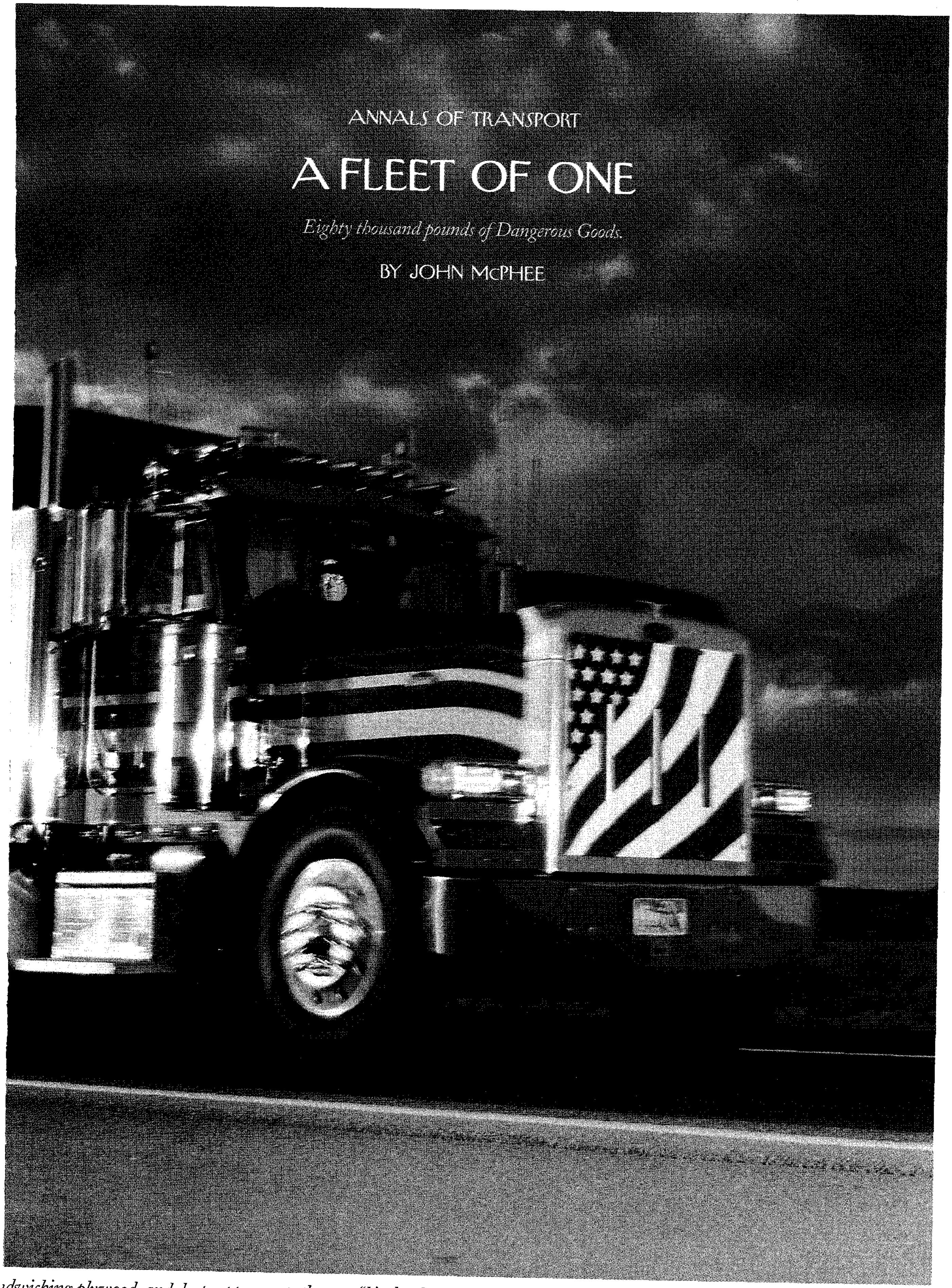
*Don Ainsworth has hauled weed killers, paint thinners, defoaming agents that form a broth in the making of explosives, latex*

ANNALS OF TRANSPORT

# A FLEET OF ONE

*Eighty thousand pounds of Dangerous Goods.*

BY JOHN McPHEE



*dwiching plywood, and dust suppressants that are "kind to horses' hooves." Photographs by Martin Schoeller.*

The little four-wheelers live on risk. They endanger themselves. They endangered us. If you're in a big truck, they're around you like gnats. They're at their worst in the on-ramps of limited-access highways, not to mention what they do on horse-and-buggy highways. They do the kissing tailgate. They do passing moves over double yellow lines. They make last-second break-ins from stop signs on feeder roads. The way they are operated suggests insufficiency in, among other things, coördination, depth perception, and rhythm. When I went to bad-driver school, the opening lecturer did not imply any such flaws in his students. He was a real bear. He wore blue-and-yellow trousers and a badge. In a voice he fired like a .45, he began by asking us, "How many of you people think you're good drivers?"

We had all been singled out in four-wheelers. My own car had a tendency to ignore stop signs without previously sensing the presence of bears. It lapsed in other ways as well. After I reached twelve points, I was offered admission to the New Jersey Driver Improvement Program, on the following voluntary basis: enroll or lose your license. Among the twenty-five people in the class, two smart-asses stuck up their hands in positive response to the instructor's question. He looked them over, then swept the room. "Well, you must all be good drivers," he said. "If you weren't, you'd be dead."

Then he darkened the room and rolled a film showing cars hitting cars in on-ramps. A, looking left, accelerates. B, looking left, accelerates. B rear-ends A, because A hesitated, and B was still looking to the left. This primal accident, the figure 8 of bad driving, was the base of a graphic montage that ended in high-speed collision and hideous death on the road.

These memories of bad-driver school ran through me in eastern Oregon after Don Ainsworth, at the wheel of his sixty-five-foot chemical tanker, gave some air horn to a step van that was coming fast up an on-ramp on a vector primed for a crash. A step van is a walk-in vehicle of the U.P.S. variety, and, like all other four-wheelers, from Jettas to Jaguars, in Ainsworth's perspective is not a truck. FedEx, Wonder Bread, Soprano Sand-and-Gravel—they're not trucks, they're four-wheelers, even if they have six wheels. A true truck has eighteen wheels, or more. From Atlanta and Charlotte to North Powder, Oregon, this was the first time that Ainsworth had so much as tapped his air horn. In three thousand one hundred and ninety miles I rode with him he used it four times. He gave it a light, muted blast to thank a woman in a four-wheeler who helped us make a turn in urban traffic close to our destination, and he used it twice in the Yakima Valley, flirting with a woman who was wearing a bikini. She passed us on I-82, and must have pulled over somewhere, because she passed us again on I-90. She waved both times the horn erupted. She was riding in a convertible and her top was down.

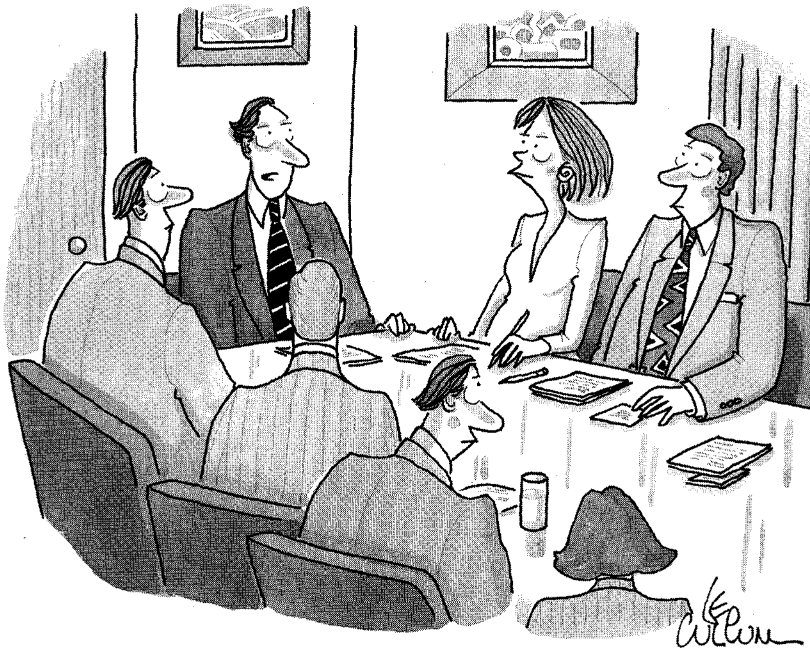
If the step van had hit us it would only have been inconvenient, the fact notwithstanding that we were hauling hazmats. The step van weighed about ten thousand pounds and we weighed eighty thousand pounds, minus a few ounces. Ainsworth said he could teach a course called On-Ramp 101. "We get many near-misses from folks who can't time their entry. They give you the finger. Women even give you the finger. Can you believe it?"

I could believe it.

"Four-wheelers will pass us and then pull in real fast and put on their brakes for no apparent reason," he said. "Four-wheelers are not aware of the danger of big trucks. They're not aware of the weight, of how long it takes to bring one to a halt, how quickly their life can be snuffed. If you pull any stunts around the big trucks, you're likely to die. I'm not going to die. You are."

We happened to be approaching Deadman Pass. We were crossing the Blue Mountains—on I-84, the Oregon Trail. He said, "Before you know it, we'll be sitting on top of Cabbage. Then we're going to fall down." He had mentioned Cabbage Hill when we were still in the Great Divide Basin. He mentioned it again in Pocatello. After crossing into Oregon and drawing closer, he brought it up twice an hour. "It's the terrific hill we fall down before we come to Pendleton. Pretty treacherous. Switchbacks. Speed restricted by weight. You'll see guys all the time with smoke flying out the brakes or even a flameout at the bottom."

From the Carolina piedmont to Hot Lake, Oregon—across the Appalachians, across the Rockies—he had not put his foot on the brake pedal on any descending grade. In harmony with shrewd gear selection, this feat was made possible by Jake Brakes—a product of Jacobs Vehicle Systems, of Bloomfield, Connecticut. Ainsworth called the device "a retarder, generically—you're turning a diesel engine into an air compressor." On a grade we descended in Tennessee, he said, "If you choose your gear right, and your jake's on maxi, you can go down a hill with no brakes. It saves



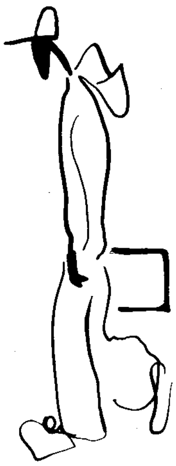
*"As board members, we need to speak with one voice. I'm suggesting Donald Duck."*

money. It also lengthens my life." Crossing the summit of the Laramie Range and addressing the western side, he geared down from twelfth to eighth and said, "I won't use one ounce of brake pressure. The jake is on maxi." As big trucks flew past us—dry boxes, reefers—he said, "These guys using brakes with improper gear selection don't own the tractor or the trailer. Using brakes costs money, but why would they care?" Ainsworth owns the tractor and the trailer. As he glided onto the Laramie Plains, he went back up to eighteenth gear: "the going-home gear, the smoke hole; when you got into this gear in the old days, your stacks would blow smoke." On a grade at Hot Lake, however, he tried fifteenth gear, and his foot had to graze the pedal. He seemed annoyed with himself, like a professional golfer who had chosen the wrong club.

And now we were about to "fall down Cabbage." In ten miles, we would drop two thousand feet, six of those miles on a six-per-cent grade. Through basaltic throughcuts we approached the brink. A sign listed speed limits by weight. If you weighed sixty thousand to sixty-five thousand pounds, your limit was thirty-seven miles an hour. In five-thousand-pound increments, speed limits went down to twenty-six and twenty-two. Any vehicle weighing seventy-five thousand pounds or more—e.g., this chemical tanker—was to go eighteen or under. A huge high view with Pendleton in it suddenly opened up. I had asked Ainsworth what makes a tractor-trailer jackknife. He had said, "You're going downhill. The trailer is going faster than the tractor. The trailer takes over. It's almost impossible to bring yourself out of it. Brakes won't do anything for you. It's a product of going too fast for the situation. It can happen on a flat highway, but nine times out of ten it's downhill." The escarpment was so steep that the median widened from a few feet to one and a half miles as the northbound and southbound lanes negotiated independent passage. Ainsworth had chosen eighth gear. He said, "Most truckers would consider this way too conservative. That doesn't mean they're bright." Oregon is the only American state in which trucks are speed-restricted by weight. Feet off both pedals, he started the fall down Cabbage praising the truck for "good jake" and himself for "nice gear selection." My ears thickened and popped.

"Six per cent is serious," he said. "I've seen some sevens or eights. British Columbia drivers talk about tens and twelves."

In two strategic places among the broad looping switchbacks were escape ramps, also known as arrester beds, where a brakeless runaway truck—its driver "mashing the brake pedal and it feels like a marshmallow"—could leave the road and plow up a very steep incline on soft sandy gravel. In winter, the gravel may not be soft. Ainsworth recalled a trucker in Idaho who hit a frozen ramp. His load, bursting through from behind, removed his head. On Cabbage Hill, deep fresh tracks went up an arrester bed several hundred feet. After trucks use a bed, it has to be regroomed. The state charges grooming fees. Some drivers, brakeless and out of control, stay on the highway and keep on plunging because they don't want to pay the grooming fees. Ainsworth said, "Would you worry about your life or the Goddamned grooming fee?"



He was asking the wrong person.

A little later, he said, "Bears will roost at the bottom here."

Fulfilling the prediction, two cars were in ambush in the median where the grade met the plain. Wheat fields filled the plain—endless leagues of wheat, big combines moving through the wheat, houses far out in the wheat concealed within capsules of trees. We passed a couple of dry boxes, both of them Freightliners. Among truckers, they are universally known as Freightshakers. "What's the difference between a Jehovah's Witness and the door on a Freightliner?" Ainsworth said.

I said I didn't happen to know.

He said, "You can close a door on a Jehovah's Witness."

We crossed the Columbia River and went over the Horse Heaven Hills into the Yakima Valley, apples and grapes in the Horse Heaven Hills, gators in the valley. To avoid a gator he swung far right, over rumble bars along the shoulder. A gator is a strip of tire, dead on the road, nearly always a piece of a recap. "A gator can rip off your fuel-crossover line, punch in your bumper, bomb out a fender."

The Yakima River was deeply incised and ran in white water past vineyards and fruit trees, among windbreaks of Lombardy poplars. Hops were growing on tall poles and dangling like leis. There was so much beauty in the wide valley it could have been in Italy. Now, through high haze, we first saw the Cascades. On our route so far, no mountain range had been nearly as impressive. We had slithered over the Rockies for the most part through broad spaces. Now we were looking at a big distant barrier, white over charcoal green, its highest visible point the stratovolcano Mt. Adams. We met three new Kenworths coming east—three connected tractors without trailers. One was hauling the other two, both of which had their front wheels up on the back of the tractor ahead of them. They looked like three dogs humping. It was here that we were first passed by the scant bikini in an open Porsche, here that Ainsworth touched his horn for the second time on the journey. I was marginally jealous that he could look down into that bikini while I, on the passenger side, was served rumble bars in the pavement. I had long since asked him what sorts of things he sees in his aerial view of four-wheelers. "People reading books," he answered. "Women putting on makeup. People committing illicit acts. Exhibitionist women like to show you their treasures. A boyfriend is driving. She drops her top."

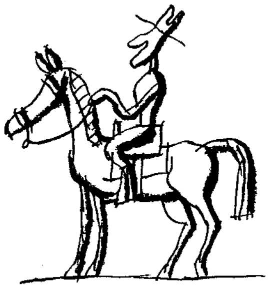
We skirted Yakima city. " 'Yakima, the Palm Springs of Washington,' " Ainsworth said. "That was written by a guy on laughing gas." He reached for his CB microphone. "Eastbounders, there's a pair of bears waiting for you. They're down there right before the flats." Now ahead of us was a long pull up North Umptanum Ridge. "We're going to give 'em hell," he said. In the left lane, he took the big tanker up to eighty-three, pressing for advantage on the climb. He was in the fast lane to overtake a flatbed hauling fifty thousand pounds of logs. The distance had almost closed; we were practically counting tree rings when the logging truck began to sway. It weaved right and then left and two feet into our lane. Ainsworth said, "Oh, my goodness!"

Ordinarily, I tend to be nervous if I

am riding in a car driven by someone else. Like as not, the someone else is Yolanda Whitman, to whom I am married. On trips, we divide the driving time. I make her nervous and she makes me nervous. She was a student in bad-driver school in the same year that I was. While she is at the wheel, I sometimes write letters. I ask the recipients to "excuse my shaky penmanship," and explain that I am "riding in a badly driven car." Coast to coast with Don Ainsworth was as calm an experience as sitting in an armchair watching satellite pictures of the Earth. In only three moments did anxiety in any form make a bid for the surface. None had to do with his driving. The first was over the Mississippi River on the bridge to St. Louis—the big arch in the foreground, the water far below—where we seemed to be driving on a high wire with no protection visible beside us, just a void of air and a deep fall to the river. The second was in St. Joseph, where we swung through town on I-229 for a look at the Missouri River, and the narrow roadway, on high stilts, was giddy, a flying causeway convex to the waterfront. Falling down Cabbage Hill, concern for safety hadn't crossed my mind. And now this big logger was bringing up a third and final shot of adrenaline. We got by tightly. The driver was smoking something.

The ridges were dry in that part of Washington—rainfall less than eight inches a year. At elevations under three thousand feet, the ridges were not notably high—certainly not with the Pacific Crest becoming ever more imminent at twelve, thirteen, fourteen thousand feet. We made another long pull, over Manastash Ridge, and drifted down from the brown country into another paradise of irrigation—instant Umbria, just add water. It was a dazzling scene, the green valley of hay, wheat, and poplars; and here the string bikini passed us again, goosed by the air horn and waving. By Cle Elum, we were pulling at the mountains themselves—less than a hundred miles from Seattle and approaching Snoqualmie Pass. Listening to his engine climb, Ainsworth called it "operatic."

Ainsworth thinks his chemical tanker is at least as attractive as anything that could pass it in a car. He is flattered by the admiring glances it draws. He is vain about his truck. That day in particular had started in a preening mode—at a nylon-covered building called Bay Wash of Idaho, next to a beet field west of Boise, where we drew up soon after six and went off to have breakfast before the big doors opened at eight. Ainsworth will not go just anywhere to have his truck's exterior washed. All over the United States and Canada, for example, are washes called Blue Beacon, and they are known among truck drivers as Streakin' Beacon. Ainsworth passes them by. He insists on places that have either reverse-osmosis or deionized rinse water. He knows of three—one in Salt Lake City, one in the Los Angeles Basin, and Bay Wash of Caldwell, Idaho. To the two guys who washed the truck he promised "a significant tip" for a picture-perfect outcome, and he crawled in granny gear through the presoak acids, the presoak alkalis, the high-concentration soap, and warm water under such high pressure that it came through the seams of the windows. "They're hand-brushing the whole critter," he said admiringly a little later. And soon he was getting "the r.o. rinse" he had come for. Ordinary water dries quickly and spottily. This water had been heated and softened, sent through a carbon bed and a sand filter, and then introduced to a membranous machine whose function was distantly analogous to the gaseous diffusion process by which isotopes of uranium are separated. In this case, dissolved minerals and heavy metals failed to get through the semipermeable membranes of the reverse-osmosis generator. Water molecules made it through the membranes and on to rinse the truck, drying spotless. The Army and the Marine Corps use reverse-osmosis generators to go into swamps and make drinkable water. (Deionization is a different process but does the same thing.) Ainsworth paid sixty dollars and tipped fifteen. We were there two hours. "If you go into a Streakin' Beacon, you're going to be out in twenty minutes," he said. "You see the amount of time we fuck around just manicuring the ship? If I were in a big hurry, I wouldn't be doing it. Lord help us." We were scarcely on the interstate rolling when he said, "This is as close as a man will ever know what it feels like to be a really gorgeous woman. People giving us looks, going thumbs up, et cetera."



This is what raised the thumbs et cetera: a tractor of such dark sapphire that only bright sunlight could bring forth its color, a stainless-steel double-conical trailer perfectly mirroring the world around it. You could part your hair in the side of this truck. The trailer seemed to be an uncomplicated tube until you noticed the fused horizontal cones, each inserted in the other to the hilt in subtle and bilateral symmetry. Ainsworth liked to call it "truly the Rolls-Royce of tanks," and then he would deliver "Ainsworth's Third Axiom: if your stainless-steel thermos seems expensive, wait till you break three glass ones." The tank looked new. He had hauled it three hundred and eighty-seven thousand miles. It was so cosmetically groomed that its dolly-crank handle was stainless steel, its fire extinguisher chrome-plated—costly touches of an optional nature, not in the Third Axiom. Ainsworth uses tire blackener in the way that some people use lipstick. The dark tractor, still in its first ten thousand miles, had several horizontal bands, red and powder blue. On its roof, its two principal antennas were segmented red, white, and blue. Its bug screen—forward, protecting the nose—was a magnified detail of a flying American flag. His earlier tractors all had similar bug-screen bunting, long before 9/11.

When Ainsworth slides into a truck stop, if there are, say, two hundred and ten trucks on the premises he is wary of two hundred and nine, not to mention others that follow him in. At a Flying J in Oak Grove, Kentucky, he went completely around the big parking lot looking for the space where he was least likely to get clipped. "You're inside the truck stop and you hear your name on the P.A.," he said. " 'Meet So-and-So at the fuel desk.' At the fuel desk is a guy with a sheepish look. Nowadays, they usually don't show up." In Little America, Wyoming, he circled a couple of hundred trucks before parking beside a light pole so only one truck could get near him. He said, "We're fifty per cent protected and that's better than one hundred per cent vulnerable." He has never been dinged and nothing has ever been stolen from his truck. " 'Constant vigilance is the price of freedom,'" he remarked. "Patrick Henry."

Ainsworth wore T-shirts with the truck's picture on them. Tall and slim—wearing tinted glasses, whitish hair coming out from under the band at the back of his cap—he had pushed sixty about as far as it would go. Only in one respect was he as well dressed as the truck. His boots, fourteen inches high, had been custom-made from the tanned hide of a water buffalo by the bootmaker J. B. Hill, of El Paso. Hanging in the sleeper behind him as he drove were boot-shaped leather bags containing other boots, like fly rods in burnished tubes. His caiman boots, he wished to point out, were made from the skins of farm-raised caimans. "Most people think they're either gator or croc. They're not custom-made. They're off the shelf."

"Whose shelf?"

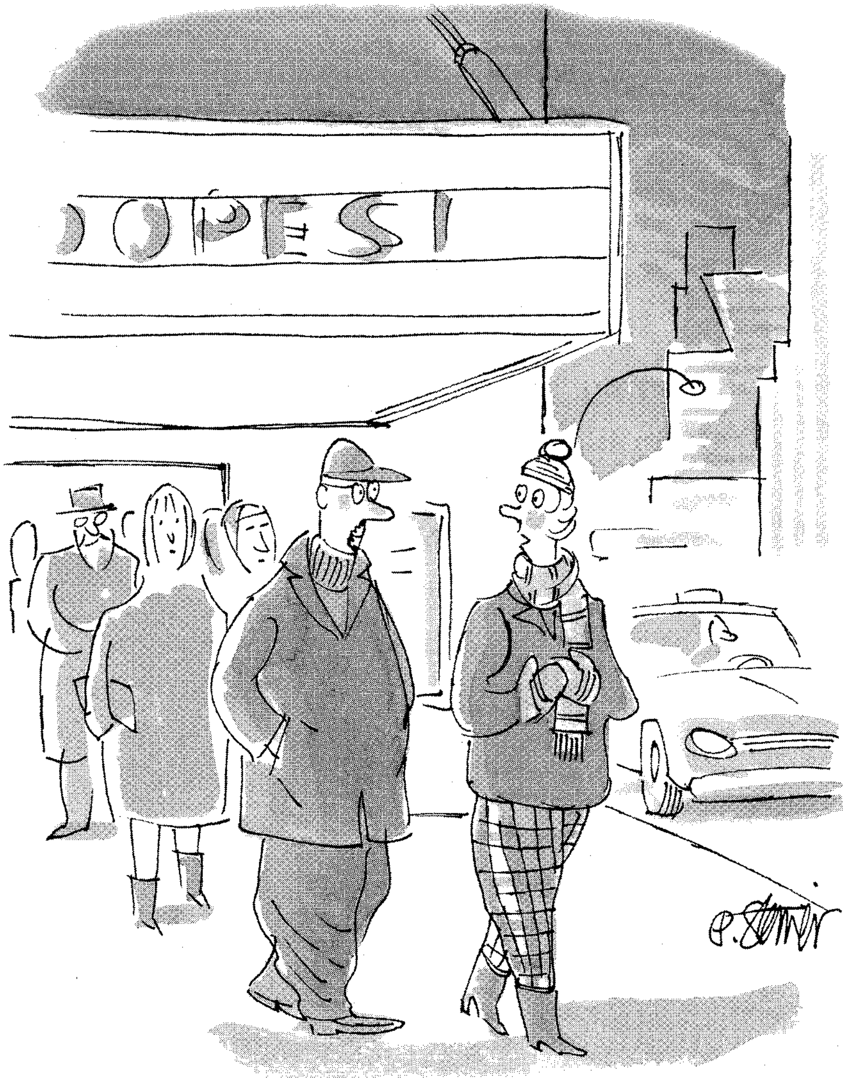
"Cavender's, in Amarillo."

In his boot library, as he calls it, are mule boots, eel boots, anteater boots, gator boots, crocodile boots. All these boots are in the Third Axiom, he says. Why? "Because they last forever." His elk and bison low walkers are made by H. S. Trask, of Bozeman. Most truck drivers are content with running shoes. Ainsworth is content never to wear them.

I rode with him as "part-owner" of the truck. I didn't own even one hub nut, but was primed to tell officials in weigh stations that that's what I was. I never had to. My identity in truck stops was at first another matter. Hatless, in short-sleeved shirts, black pants, and plain leather shoes, I had imagined I would be as nondescript as I always am. But I was met everywhere with puzzled glances. Who is that guy? What's he selling? What's he doing here? It was bad enough out by the fuel pumps, but indoors, in the cafés and restaurants, I felt particularly self-conscious sitting under block-lettered signs that said "Truck Drivers Only."

So, a little desperate and surprisingly inspired, I bought a cap. Not just any cap. I picked one with a bright-gold visor, a gold button at the top, a crown of navy blue, an American flag on the left temple, and—on the forehead emblem—a spread-winged eagle over a rising sun and a red-and-green tractor-trailer and the white letters "America—Spirit of Freedom." On the back, over my cerebellum, was a starred banner in blue, white, red, green, and gold that said "Carnesville, GA Petro." I put on that hat and disappeared. The glances died like flies. I could sit anywhere, from Carnesville to Tacoma. In Candler, North Carolina, while Ainsworth was outside fuelling the truck, I sat inside in my freedom hat saying "Biscuits and gravy" to a waitress. She went "Oooooo wheeeee" and I thought my cover wasn't working, but a trucker passing her had slipped his hand between the cheeks of her buttocks, and she did not stop writing.

I would pay for my freedom at the Seattle-Tacoma airport, when—with a one-way ticket bought the previous day—I would arrive to check in for home. Sir, your baggage has been randomly selected for radiation therapy. Please carry it to that far corner of the terminal. My boarding pass was covered with large black letters: "S S S S S S." At the gate, I was once again "randomly selected" for a shoes-off, belt-rolled, head-to-toe frisk. I had become a Class 1 hazmat. At home was a letter from Visa dated two days before my return. "Please call 1-800-SUSPECT immediately." Yes? "Please explain the unusual activity: Georgia? Oregon? Petro? Flying J? Kirk's



*"O.K., so no animals were harmed, but were they adequately compensated?"*

*Ainsworth thinks his chemical tanker is at least as attractive as anything that could pass it in a car.*

CORBIS SABA

Nebraskaland? Little America? What is your mother's maiden name?"

"Was."

Self-employed, Ainsworth has an agent in North Salt Lake. Ainsworth rarely knows where he will be going, or with what, until a day or two in advance. "I am in a very specialized portion of trucking," he had once told me. "I have chemicals in a tanker. The whole game hinges on tank washings. Without tank washings, tankers would roll loaded one-way, then go back to origin to load again. In the old days, it was all dedicated runs. Now, due to the widespread existence of interior tank washes, we can move around, taking different things."

For example, when I joined the truck, in Bankhead, Georgia, he was hauling a load of concentrated WD-40 east from San Diego. He had called the day before, from Birmingham, to say that he had just learned that after delivering the WD-40 in Gainesville, Georgia, he would be going to the Spartanburg Tank Wash, in South Carolina, then deadheading to Harrisburg, North Carolina, where he would pick up the hazmats for the haul west. We had been corresponding for four years but had never met. I was at Newark airport two hours after his call.

Before San Diego, he had hauled a surfactant from Salt Lake to New Mexico. He had washed in Phoenix and deadheaded west. To Hill Air Force Base, in Ogden, Utah, he once hauled parts degreaser for F-16s. From Philadelphia to Superior, Wisconsin, he hauled "a secret ingredient" to the company that manufactures Spy Grease. After bouncing to Neenah to wash, he loaded at Appleton a soap used in the making and curing of bricks. It was bound for Dixon, California. He has hauled weed killers, paint thinners, defoaming agents that form a broth in the making of explosives, latex for sandwiching plywood, and dust suppressants that are "kind to horses' hooves." To Fresno he took latex for a dye that turns brown cardboard white. Wood squeezings, or lignin liquor, is used in curing cement. He has carried it from Bellingham to Rancho Cucamonga—northern Washington to southern California. He turns down a job maybe once a year. "I don't want to haul any more cashew-nutshell oil—I believe it harms my barrel," he said. Cashew-nutshell oil arrives in ships from Brazil. "You can't make any friction device—clutches, brake shoes, brake pads—without it. It looks like creosote or asphalt. It's a hard wash. It calls for a stripper."

South of Pocatello, in a brightly greened irrigation valley, we met a Ranger reefer coming the other way. "They're out of Buhl, Idaho," he said. "They raise trout. I took some liquid fish guts up there last year—out of a tuna place in L.A. Harbor." Before the liquid fish guts, his load had been soap. Generally, the separation is distinct between food-grade and chemical tankers. You haul chemicals or you haul food. The vessels are different, the specs are different—mainly in protective devices against the aftermath of rollovers. Ainsworth used to haul wine, orange juice, and chocolate. He mentioned a load of concentrated cranberry juice worth five hundred thousand dollars, a load of chocolate worth seven hundred thousand. He said orange-juice haulers sometimes carry sizing agents on the return trip (sizing agents control shrinkage in textiles). Very few companies carry both foods and chemicals even in completely separate tankers. Ainsworth remembers a California carrier with a fleet of about twenty trucks who carried paint thinner, washed, and then picked up wine. He said, "Your brother better be F. Lee Bailey if you're going to engage in practices like that."

In Gainesville, north Georgia, less than fifty miles from Atlanta, we arrived at Piedmont Laboratories, Inc., on Old Candler Road, at 7:59 A.M. Piedmont is an independent packer of everything from hair spray and shaving cream to WD-40. "If it's rainy and your car won't start, rip off the distributor cap and spray it in there," Ainsworth said. "The WD means water displacement." A man named Bomba Satterfield came out—brown shirt, brown trousers—and took a sample of our brown liquid. Ainsworth hooked up a Piedmont hose to force out the cargo with compressed air. By nine we were discharging. Ainsworth said, "We're flowin' and a-goin' right now, Bomba. It'll be about an hour." Satterfield disappeared. Ainsworth said, "Got to take a whiz." As he started off in search of a men's room, he said to me, "If the cargo starts to spill or all hell breaks loose, turn that stopcock and pull down the lever of the internal valve." All hell stayed put, to the relief of the part-owner.

When the load was gone, air was hissing from a valve at the top of the tanker. "If we let air go into the company's tank it would roil the waters," Ainsworth said, adding helpfully, "That's r-o-i-l." He climbed up the steel ladder on the side of the vessel and began, gingerly, to undog the dome. The dome cover was nearly two feet in diameter and was secured by six dogs. "Bleed before you break," he said. "Air is bleeding. Pressure can kill you if you break early." He said he had "heard of guys being blown off the tops of their trucks and into walls and killed." He had "heard of guys having their heads blown off." Other discharging methods could result in negative pressures no less serious. You could implode the tank. If you worked on railroad tank cars, which are made of carbon steel, you could crush them with implosion and twist them like beer cans. Your head would not come off but you would surely be fired. From the dome, we looked down inside the vessel. It looked almost clean. The heel, or residue, was—as we would learn at the interior wash—scarcely more than one ten-thousandth of the six thousand gallons that had been there.

The Spartanburg Tank Wash charged him less than two hundred dollars. It consisted of four parallel bays in what had recently been country. After three pints of heel went into a bucket, a Texas spinner was lowered through the dome. "They're using ultrahot water—just below steam—and detergent," Ainsworth said. "It's an easy wash." A Texas spinner is a Gamma Jet, directing blasts of water at a hundred pounds of pressure per square inch. The procedure took two hours. "They use steam for caustic, and strippers for supercorrosive solutions," Ainsworth remarked while we waited. "You clean out cement mixers with sugar and water." He had a chemical dictionary in his truck to help tank washers break down any unusual product he might be carrying. "But wash guys usually know. Are you aware that a lot of wash guys get killed every year by nitrogen blankets? Customers sometimes use nitrogen to force a load out of a truck. Then the driver goes to a wash. A wash man goes into the tank. He dies. The driver should have alerted him." Some tank washes that service food vessels are kosher. A rabbi is there, supervising.

Directions supplied by Chemical Specialties, Inc., to 5910 Pharr Mill Road, Harrisburg, North Carolina, were written for vehicles approaching the region from the direction opposite ours. When Ainsworth is given imperfect directions, he sometimes asks, on arrival at the company office, "How did you get to work?" Often the answer is "I take the bus." Ainsworth: "That's apparent." At Chemical Specialties, he nosed onto a scale that was under a loading rack lined with bulbous vats. Releasing air, locking the brakes, he said, "O.K., we're in the tall cotton." Variously, the tall cotton was zinc nitrate, manganese nitrate, D-Blaze fire-retardant solution, monoethanolamine. Before filling our vessel, a company handler of hazmats rattled off questions while Ainsworth nodded affirmatively: "You got a wash-out slip? Is your outlet closed? Can you take forty-five thousand pounds?" Ainsworth, for his part, had a question he was required to ask the shipper: "Do we have to display placards?" But he knew the answer and he had the four placards—diamond-shaped, bearing the number 8 and the number 1760 and an inky sketch of test tubes spilling. If you dipped your fish in this hazmat, you would lift out its skeleton, but the hazmat at least was not combustible, not flammable, not explosive. The "8" meant "Corrosive." The "1760" stood for monoethanolamine.

We took it in by hose through the dome. As we filled, Ainsworth sat in the cab plotting his way west. Hazmats had to stay off restricted routes and avoid all tunnels except exempted tunnels. With your tire thumper, you did a tire check once every two hours or hundred miles, whichever came sooner. "Any fines that have to do with hazmats you take a large number and multiply it by a grandiose number," he said. "There's a twenty-seven-thousand-five-hundred-dollar maximum fine." A Class 6 hazmat is poison. A Class 9 hazmat with zebra stripes is "as close to harmless as you're going to get." Explosives are Class 1. Even Ainsworth develops wariness in the presence of a Class 1 placard. Seeing one at a truck stop in Cheyenne, he said, "You might not want to park next to him at night." If a placard with a 3 on it is white at the bottom, the load in the truck is combustible. If a placard with a 3 on it is red at the bottom, the load in the truck is flammable. Odd as it may seem, Gilbert and Sullivan did not write the hazmat codes. A flammable substance has a lower flash point than a combustible substance, according to the codes. "Hazmats" may soon be a word of the past. In Canada they are called "Dangerous Goods" and the term may become international. Hard liquor is a Class 3 hazmat. Depending on its proof, it is either combustible or flammable. The Glenlivet is combustible. Beefeater is flammable.

I got out of the truck to look at the hose in the dome. Ainsworth said, "Get back in. We're almost loaded and your weight has to be part of the total." He should not exceed eighty thousand pounds, and the part-owner's hundred and fifty would matter. We were, after all, parked on a scale. Drawing on his knowledge of nineteenth-century rifle-sighting, he said, "Kentucky windage and Tennessee elevation is what you are doing if you're not right on a scale."

And moments later Ainsworth said, "He's hammering on my dogs. We're getting ready to get out of here." He backed away from the loading rack, stopped the truck, and went off to sign papers and receive from a laboratory his Certificate of Analysis. As if in a minor earthquake, the truck trembled for minutes after he was gone, its corrosive fluid seiching back and forth. As we began to roll for the Pacific Northwest, he said, "We're weighing seventy-nine thousand seven hundred and twenty, so we'll have to plug our brains in to see where we're going to fuel."

In this trade, if you were "grossed out" you were flirting with the weight limit. In weigh stations, they could "make you get legal"—keep you right there until you discharged enough cargo not to be overweight. "Grain haulers, they may know a farmer who will take it, but this corrosive stuff is something else," Ainsworth said. His twin saddle tanks, one on either side of the tractor, could hold three hundred gallons, and "a full belly of fuel," at seven pounds a gallon, would weigh twenty-one hundred pounds. We never had anything like a full belly. Constantly he had to calculate, and cut it fine. With no disrespect for the Chemical Specialties scale, he sought a second opinion, pulling into a Wilco Travel Plaza forty miles up the road, where he came to a stop on a commercial CAT Scale (Certified Automated Truck Scale). While Ainsworth waited, while a truck behind us waited, and while the cashier in the CAT booth waited, the load in the big steel vessel took five minutes to calm down. Ainsworth paid $7.50, got a reading of 79,660, and renewed his fuel calculations. In Candler, North Carolina, at TravelCenters of America, he took on fifty-five gallons of fuel—"just a dab"—and, to pay $75.85, lined up at the truck stop's fuel desk behind a couple of dry-box drivers with lighter loads, who paid $325.63 and $432.22 for their fuel. Always near the intersections of interstates, truck stops have also tended to sprout on the leeward side of weigh stations. Approaching a Flying J just west of Knoxville, he said, "We're going to take on some Mormon motion lotion." He paid Flying J, a company based in Utah, $65.96 for another fifty-five gallons. Waiting behind trucks at fuel bays, Ainsworth sought to avoid being trapped, because some drivers park at the pumps, go inside, eat, and shower. Farther west, where space expanded, he could show more generosity to the saddle tanks. At the Nebraskaland Truck Stop, in Lexington, he bought a hundred gallons for $135.90. In the bays, there was always a pump on either side of the truck, one for each fuel tank. Truckers call the two pumps the master and the slave. One pump has the rolling numbers, the other is blank. As a general rule, if you take on fifty gallons or more at a truck stop, you get to shower and overnight free.

"I have everything tied up in making ends meet."

Many weigh stations have sensors that provide, as you enter, a ballpark assessment of your respect for the law. If a green arrow lights up after you go over the sensor, you bypass all other apparatus and move on. The stations have dynamic scales that you slowly roll across and static scales, on which you stop. The weight on each axle is critical as well as the gross. You obey brightly lettered, progressively stern, electrically lighted signs: "Ahead," "Stop," "Park Bring Papers." Sometimes in weigh stations the I.R.S. is present—there to check the color of fuel. Clear fuel is the only fuel you can legally burn on the highway. Red-dye fuel is maritime fuel, farm fuel, or for use in stationary engines. If you are caught with dyed fuel, the fine starts at a thousand dollars. Ainsworth recalled disdainfully a trucker-negative

*"Of course, this doesn't mean we can't still be contemporaries."*

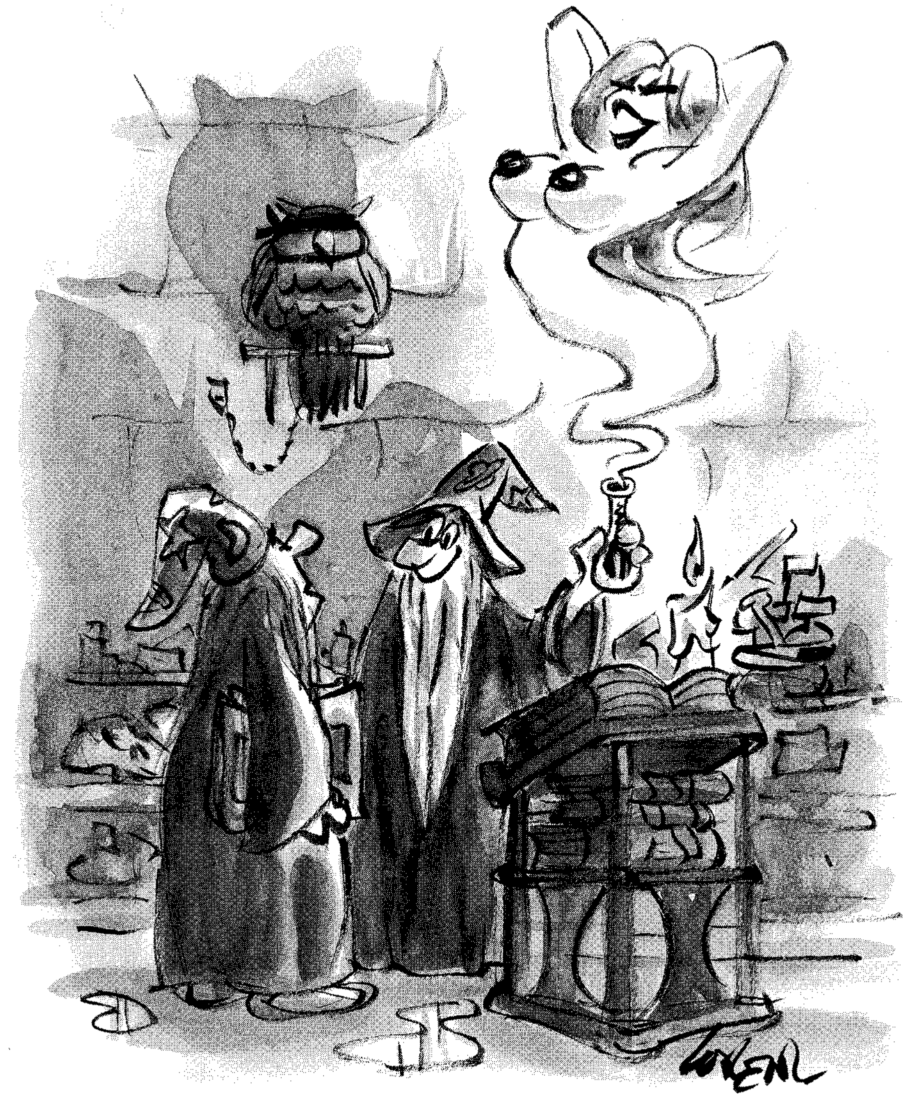
television piece in which "they only interviewed people in the failure line at scales—outlawish people, running around with no sleep, pinching asses, and going a hundred miles an hour." Park bring papers. In a weigh station east of Boise, we passed a painted wooden sign that said "Leaking Hazardous Materials Next Right." We weren't leaking. We proceeded on.

While the common weight limit for five-axle eighteen-wheelers is eighty thousand pounds, in some states you can carry a greater load if, on more axles, you spread the load out. Near Lincoln, for example, when we met a seven-axled ag hopper, Ainsworth said, "He can gross maybe a hundred thousand pounds. He takes grain from Nebraska to Salt Lake and brings salt back." The more axles you add, the more you can legally carry. In 1979, westbound at Rawlins, Wyoming, Ainsworth, in a reefer hauling pork, came up behind a "Long Load Oversize Load" surrounded by pilot cars, a press car, a spare tractor, a tire truck, mechanics, and bears. A lowboy, it had eighteen axles and a hundred and twenty-eight tires. From Argonne National Laboratory, southwest of Chicago, to the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, in Palo Alto, California, it was carrying a superconducting magnet that weighed a hundred and seven tons. At close to half a million pounds gross, this itinerant enterprise was the largest legal load ever to move in the United States, a record that has since been eclipsed. To Don Ainsworth, the magnet was just a magnet. But the truck—the tractor! "It was a Kenworth—olive and glossy—with an olive trailer, a sharp-looking rig."

The most beautiful truck on earth—Don Ainsworth's present sapphire-drawn convexing elongate stainless mirror—gets a smidgen over six miles to the gallon. As its sole owner, he not only counts its calories with respect to its gross weight but with regard to the differing fuel structures of the states it traverses. In western Idaho, we took on fuel at $1.299 a gallon. An hour later, in Oregon, we passed pumps that were selling diesel for $1.199. He said, "It's much better for us to take Idaho fuel than that phony-assed Oregon fuel. It's expensive fuel that looks cheap." The Idaho fuel included all Idaho taxes. The Oregon fuel did not include Oregon's ton-mileage tax, which Oregon collects through driver logs reported to each truck's base-plate state (in Ainsworth's case, Utah). Oregon feints with an attractive price at the pump, but then shoots an uppercut into the ton-mileage. Passing a sign in Oregon that flogged the number 1.199, he said, "You got to add 24.9 to that to get a true price."

In general, he remarked, fuel is cheap on or below I-40, and north of I-40 it's costly. He particularly likes the "fuel structures" of Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, and Oklahoma. To save a couple of thousand pounds and commensurate money, some hazmat-carrying chemical tankers are made of a fibreglass-reinforced quarter-inch plywood with balsa core. Ainsworth's aesthetics do not include balsa cores. He would rather be caught dead in running shoes. In Idaho, in a heavy quartering wind on the huge plateau beyond Mountain Home, he could barely get into eighteenth gear and could feel the wind getting into his wallet, running up the cost of fuel. In the Laramie Basin, where we passed a collection of wrecked trucks, he said, "This place is Hatteras for box trailers. Those six wrecks, probably, were blown over in the wind. In terms of hurting your fuel economy, a side wind is every bit as bad as a headwind. The smaller the gap between the back of the cab and the nose of the trailer the better off you are in terms of fuel economy." In his mind as on his calculator, he paid constant attention to cost efficiencies. The Wyoming speed limit was seventy-five. Driving into a setting sun near Rock Springs, he said, "All day long I've been going seventy in an effort to save fuel." He asked if I knew what heaven is. Heaven is "this month's Playmate in the passenger seat, last month's in the sleeper, and diesel fuel at ten cents a gallon tax paid." Time and again, as we crossed the continent, he said, "I am a businessman whose office is on eighteen wheels. I have a fleet of one."

Most owner-operators own just their tractors. They haul company trailers. In the hazmat-tanker business, Ainsworth knows of only one other driver who owns his whole truck. Insurance is near prohibitive. Per vehicle per accident, the limit of liability for a dry box or a flatbed is seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. For a chemical tanker, the limit of liability is five million. So why did Ainsworth want to own the whole truck? "First," he answered, "my piece of the pie increases. Second, I maintain her. I know what kind of shape she is in." The "wages" he pays himself are $1.08 times the odometer. But that pie he referred to was filled with more than hours driven. What did he and the truck earn in a typical year? A



*"Nice—but I thought we were transmuting base metal into gold."*

good year? His responses were strictly elliptical. He would sooner tell you what he paid for his water-buffalo boots, and he was not about to reveal that, either. Instead, he said, "Would we be waltzing around in a brand-new Pete and a virtually new tanker if there was no money in this business? And would my banker back me up? It's good money. It really is."

He said truck drivers make about seventy thousand a year if they are Teamsters, but few are. "Teamsters don't even organize trucking companies anymore. There's no point. Trucking is overpowered by non-union drivers." And companies pay them thirty-five thousand a year. Specialists like auto-haulers can make a hundred thousand a year. An owner-operator may gross a hundred thousand, but roughly half is overhead: payments on the tractor, road taxes, insurance, maintenance, and about seventeen thousand dollars' worth of fuel. There are some three hundred and fifty thousand independents on the road, hauling "mostly reefers and flats." And what about the people in local six-wheelers—dump trucks, delivery trucks? "Those guys who drive these little shit boxes around make thirty to forty grand a year. But, as I've said, they're not truck drivers. A truck driver drives an eighteen-wheeler. The skill level to drive those little step vans is like a kid riding a trike."

Don's father, Arthur Ainsworth, was born in Lancashire, and came to Canada, and then to western New York, after the Second World War. He became the editor-in-chief of *Screw Machine Engineering*, a magazine whose name a hyphen would have improved. In 1952, he gave up journalism and began rebuilding machine tools, specifically the Davenport Automatic Screw Machine. He also bought fifteen acres south of Rochester—a truck farm. "I'm a farm boy," Don says often, and that is where he grew up, one of seven kids, in the "muck empire" around Honeoye Falls, growing celery, sweet corn, onions, and cucumbers, and hauling them to the farmers' market in the city.

He went to Honeoye Falls High School, class of 1960. After four years as a billing clerk for the Mushroom Express trucking company, he joined the Army, and served in the Azores and at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey ("a lot of those people were spooks"). He was a reporter on the base newspaper. Out of the Army, he found a billing-clerk job in California, and in 1971 was married. He has two children. Jeff, who lives in Sioux City, hauls livestock in his own truck. Alisa lives in Newport Beach, California, and is a programmer/analyst.

Divorced in 1975, he has not remarried, but he calls a woman named Jill Jarvis three or four times a week and sees her half a dozen times a year. She lives in Dayton, Ohio. They met in 1989 in the lot at a Union 76 truck stop near Los Banos, California, in the Great Central Valley. She owned her own tractor in the reefer trade, and it had a crumpled fender. He asked what had happened. She said, "Man driver!" She travelled with a very large German shepherd that had flunked out of training for the L.A.P.D. If anything made her uncomfortable in the society of her peers, she would call out, "Here, Fluffy! Come here, Fluffy," and the big shepherd would leap out of her truck.

In 1976, when he was freshly single, Don began to hang around truck stops in the Los Angeles Basin. Thirty-four years old, he was seeking informal training on the road. At a Union 76 in Ontario, near Riverside, he saw a guy changing a headlamp, chatted him up, and learned that he was independent. His name was Tim, and sure, he said, why not? Don could come along. They took a load of lettuce to Iowa, and returned with pork, team driving. Four months later, Don bought Tim's truck—"a 1973

Peterbilt cab-over with a skillet face." With it, he did "endless pork-and-produce loops," and in 1977 bought his own refrigerated trailer. When "the produce market went to hell," he sold his reefer and found a tanker outfit—Silver Springs Transport, Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida—that would teach him the ways of tankers and take him on as an independent contractor. In addition to the orange juice and the chocolate, he hauled liquid chicken feed, lard, and tallow. It was a living, but after a while he was running empty too much of the time, getting too much deadhead. So he switched to chemical transport.

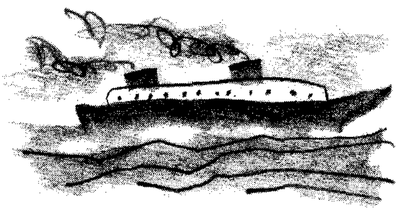
He watches his diet. Ordering dinner from a Waffle House menu in Smyrna, Georgia, he asked for a salad with his T-bone instead of the eggs. In the Kingdom City Petro, Kingdom City, Missouri, he had a big sirloin for breakfast with eggs over easy and toast. We went past Kansas City, up through western Iowa, and had lunch in Nebraska that day. Typically, we had lunch eight hours after breakfast. He described himself as a teetotaller and a nonsmoker all his life. He said "nor'west" for "northwest" and "mile" for "miles" ("It's twenty or thirty mile down the road"). He spoke trucker. A dump truck was a bucket. A moving van was a bedbugger. A motorcycle was a murdercycle, or crotch rocket, driven by a person wearing a skid lid. A speedo was a speeding violation. A civilian was someone not a truck driver. A lollipop was a mile marker. A "surface street" was anything off the interstate. On a horse-and-buggy highway, look for William Least Heat-Moon. He also used words like "paucity" and spoke of his "circadian rhythms." He frequently exclaimed, "Lord help us!" He said "shit" and "fuck" probably no more than you do. He seemed to have been to every jazz festival from Mt. Hood to Monterey. He had an innate pedagogical spirit, not always flattering but always warm. Twenty-two miles into Oregon, he explained the time zones of the United States. "There's four time zones with an hour's difference between them," he said. "Spread your four fingers. There's three zones between them." Or, as a Montrealer is said to have said to a Newfoundlander laying sod, "Green side up!"

Each morning, everywhere, he hunted for "the Walleye," often in frustration, because the Walleye tended not to be where his truck could go: "You just don't roll around with hazmat placards looking for the *Wall Street Journal*." He referred to the *Journal* conservatively as "the best-written paper in the world." In the course of a day that began in central Tennessee and went on through Kentucky and southern Illinois, he found no Walleye until we pulled into a QT in St. Peters, Missouri—"a convenience store on steroids that has grown into an El Cheapo truck stop"—where we parked between the pumps in a fuelling bay, left the truck, went inside, bought the *Wall Street Journal*, Xeroxed fifteen pages from "Hazardous Materials Transportation: The Tank Truck Driver's Guide," bought sandwiches to go, took a whiz, went back to the truck, pumped no fuel, and departed.

"Do you know of a writer named Joan Didion?" he had asked me in North Carolina.

I was too shy to say, "Take the 'of' out."

"She is a powerful writer," he went on. "She was raised in the San Joaquin Valley and now lives in New York City. Do you remember an author—he's dead now, twenty or thirty years; they celebrate him up there in the valley . . . ?" Silent for a mile or two, working on it, he eventually said, "Saroyan. William Saroyan." He had Cormac McCarthy's "Border Trilogy" in the truck. "It's the third time I've read it," he said, "but it's like 'Moby-Dick,' you learn something new every time." Out of the blue, in widely scattered moments, he mentioned other writers, editors. They seemed to come up out of the landscape like cellphone towers. On I-85, George Plimpton: "Is he head of the *Paris Review* today?" On I-40, William Styron: "He really knows his cured ham." *Esquire* materialized on I-640 in Knoxville: "I don't know how you can run a man's magazine if you're a lady." As we crossed the Missouri River for the first time, Heat-Moon rose for the first time, too. Seeing two combines and a related house trailer in Little America, Wyoming, Ainsworth said he had read "a great book, a terrific book" called "Dream Reaper" that described a new machine for harvesting wheat, but he couldn't remember the name of the author.



"Craig Canine."

The ten-acre parking lot behind the Kingdom City Petro, in Missouri, was covered with steel biscuits, by now familiar to me—yellow humps, about a foot in diameter, protruding from the asphalt. "When the Martians land and try to figure things out, the toughest thing is going to be the yellow hump at the truck stop," Ainsworth said, but actually any self-respecting extraterrestrial would go straight to a yellow hump and start plugging in jacks to cable TV, the Internet, and the land-line telephone system. After dark, the big parking lots appear to be full of blue fireflies, as drivers lying in their sleepers watch TV. For team drivers, many trucks have in-motion satellite TV. Tractors come with built-in television trays. They're not an option. A truck with no television is about as common as a house without TV in Van Nuys. Ainsworth's TV shelf had boots on it.

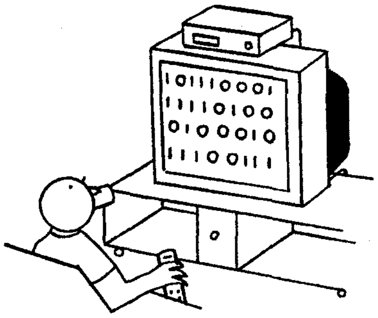
Explosives are carried in liquid form in tankers. The more prudent truck stops have designated "safe havens"—Class 1 parking spaces situated, if not in the next county, at least, as Ainsworth put it, "a little away from the rest of the folks who may not want to be there when the thing lights off." Meanwhile, the main parking areas are always decibelled with the idling sounds of diesel engines and refrigeration units. At night in Bankhead, under the full moon, six hundred trucks were idling. It was hot in Georgia but the drivers were cool. Iowa, Oregon, everywhere, the trucks in the truck stops are idling, summer and winter, adjusting personal levels of coolness and warmth. When you are walking in a lot through the throaty sound of hundreds of idling trucks, it is as if you were on the roof of a co-op beside the air-conditioner. From the sidewalks at impressive distances, some drivers can hear their own trucks within the chorus, their own cicada reefers.

The concatenation of so many trucks can be intimidating to new, young drivers. Parking spaces are usually designed so that trucks can enter them and exit them moving in the same direction. But not always. Sooner or later, you have to back up, or make some other maneuver that raises the requirements of skill. "In truck stops, you see guys with stagefright," Ainsworth said, as we entered the Flying J in Oak Grove, Kentucky. They take their stagefright with them when they leave. Some years ago, a young tractor-trailer driver, new in his job, picked up a load in Minnesota bound for New York City. He got as far as the apron of the George Washington Bridge, where he became so nervous and scared that he stopped the truck, left it there, and headed for a bus station.

Ainsworth's favorite line in truck-stop restaurants is "I see a lot of civilians in here, a very good sign. You see a civilian and the food is good." My own first choice comes off the public-address system like this: "Shower No. 275 is now ready." While guys in truck stops are waiting for showers—or just killing time—they sit in the TV rooms and stare. One hour a week they are asked to clear the TV rooms for Sunday religious services. They gripe and yell obscenities. Ministers are provided by Truckstop Ministries Incorporated, of Atlanta; Transport for Christ International, of Ephrata, Pennsylvania; Truckers' Christian Chapel Ministries, of Enon, Ohio. Some truck stops have mobile-unit chapels permanently parked in mid-lot. "Sometimes they take you to a real church, and return you," Ainsworth said. He seldom misses a Sunday service.

He locked the cab wherever he parked. "Dopers are everywhere," he explained. "And they know the value of everything. In truck stops it's not truckers who bother me, it's pimps and whores, people who want to steal, and people who want to sell you Rolex watches with Timex guts." He said of a truck stop in the backcountry of eastern Oregon, "At one time it was a whorehouse with fuel pumps." Generally speaking, though, the seaminess of truck stops is in inverse proportion to their distance from major cities. In fact, you could generally call them wholesome if they're out in the tall corn. He described certain truck stops in the eastern Los Angeles Basin as "dangerous" and said they were full of burglars who would "hit you over the head," pushers, fencers of stolen goods, and hookers known as "sleeper leapers," who go from truck to truck. "The stops have security, but once the sleeper leapers get in there's no getting rid of them. You don't say 'Get lost.' They might hurt your truck. You say, 'I just left mama. I'm O.K.'"

In a bitter ice-cold winter wind at a truck stop on I-80 in South Holland, Illinois, he had seen a hooker going around the lot dressed in only a blouse and a miniskirt. Outside New York City, in his experience, no regional truck stop is less safe than the service area on the New Jersey Turnpike named for Vince Lombardi. His description of it was all but identical to his description of the truck stops of Los Angeles: "The Vince Lombardi plaza is a real dangerous place. Whores. Dope. Guys who'll hit you over the head and rob you. A lot of unsavory people wandering around, and not your brethren in transport." About his brethren in transport, the most unsavory item that Ainsworth pointed out to me was lying beside a curb at the edge of a truck-stop parking lot in Kentucky. It was a plastic quart-size fruit-juice bottle with—apparently—apple juice in it. He said, "That isn't apple juice. It's urine. They generally leave the bottles by the trucks. Other trucks run over them. When you see wet pavement, that isn't rainwater."



You see children playing in the truck-stop parking lots, especially in summer—eight-year-olds in baggy short pants like their parents'. A woman in Little America was walking her dog beside a closed auto-hauler with a custom sleeper. A closed auto-hauler hauls concealed expensive cars. A custom sleeper is a family home, stretched onto a bobtail. Indiana Custom Trucks, of Lagrange, Indiana, makes kitchen-bedroom-parlors that cost more than the tractors themselves and, of course, have in-motion satellite TV. "People think truck drivers are all evil and mean," Ainsworth said when we were still in North Carolina, and even earlier in our acquaintance

## FERMATA

One of me stuttered and one
of me broke, and one of me tried

to fasten a line to one of
me untying it from me.

One of me watched a fisherman haul
a sand shark from the breaker,

while another was already years later,
returned to where a local man

baited for striper but landed a shark.
One of me sat under olivine clouds,

clouds of cerise, a courtesan sky,
and one of me sunned himself

as a child, imagining a fish rod
turned fermata. One waved a sash

of cornflower blue, one heard
a windmill, one heard the wind,

one waved goodbye to an imminent
leftover love. And one strolled

barefoot and sunburnt across
the nickel inhibitions of afternoon,

tossing amber bottles at a smoke tree,
the gun lake, swimming toward

his family on the dock as twilight fell,
as the same boy stayed behind

to look at him swim. One believed
a father could be killed by falling rock,

and one woke up to find he'd only
dreamt, although his father was dead,

and one believed in a beautiful house
not built by any hand. One promised

nothing would break, and nothing did,
and one saw breaking everywhere

and could not say what he saw.

—*Andrew Zawacki*

he said, "Please do not entertain any stereotypical notions about truck drivers—i.e., that they are tobacco-chewing, ill-educated, waitress-pinching folk raised on red beans and rice and addicted to country music." He is dour about the brethren's obscenities and profanities while talking with one another on CB radio. "A lot of four-wheelers have CBs," he said. "The truckers' language reinforces the stereotype that truck drivers are fourth-grade-educated grease-under-the-fingernails skirt-chasing butt-pinching dumdums. Dodos." Sometimes you look into trucks and see big stuffed animals on the passenger seat. "Lots of real dogs, too. The dog of choice is poodle."

I think it can be said, generally, that truckers are big, amiable, soft-spoken, obese guys. The bellies they carry are in the conversation with hot-air balloons. There are drivers who keep bicycles on their trucks but they are about as common as owner-operators of stainless-steel chemical tankers. At the Peterbilt shop in O'Fallon, Missouri, we saw a trucker whose neck was completely blue with tattoos. Like many other drivers in the summer heat, he was wearing shorts, running shoes, and white socks. Some still wear bib overalls—the Idaho tuxedo, according to Ainsworth. Sometimes it's the Louisiana tuxedo. Bull racks are trucks that carry cattle. If a bull rack has a possum belly, slung down inches from the pavement, it can variously carry "hogs, sheep, goats, cattle, vicuñas—whatever." Bull-rack drivers, according to Ainsworth, are "all macho guys." In Wyoming, we passed a Freightliner driven by a slight Asian woman in a baseball cap. She wore glasses and her hair was gray. In Oregon, an England company dry box out of Salt Lake overtook and passed us. Ainsworth described the driver as "a lady who looks like a grandmother." Women are now about five per cent of all truck drivers. "You have to have half-ass mechanical skills," he said modestly. "Women don't have such skills." Quite rare are "single lady drivers" and two-female teams. Man plus woman, however, seems to work out as a team. "For a husband and wife it can be a very simple chore. They have drop trailers at both ends. Dropping and hooking, they can easily do a thousand miles a day." The sun never sets on the languages spoken by American truck drivers.

Drug use is "not rampant" among truckers, he said. "Random drug screening is fairly effective. Preëmployment screening, too. If they see you staggering around and your eyes are red, you're going for a for-cause screening—urine test, blood test, et cetera. They test for five things: cocaine, marijuana, angel dust, amphetamines, and heroin. Many times, they'll give you a saliva test, just like a horse, right on the spot." Alcohol? "I don't smell it on guys." As a teetotaller, he is a particularly qualified smeller. Truck stops sell beer, and Ainsworth approves. "Better to have it right there than to be rolling around in your bobtail looking for a liquor store."

Just as the body of a fish tells you how that fish makes a living, the body of a tanker can tell you what it contains. In Ainsworth's words, "The architecture of the tank says what is in it." If a tank has gasoline inside, it has a full-length permanent manway on top, and, seen from the rear, is a recumbent oval. If a truck is a water wagon, the tank—rear view—is rectangular. A perfect circle ambiguously suggests asphalt, milk, or other food. If the vessel is all aluminum and shaped in tiers like nesting cups, it is a food-grade pneumatic hopper full of flour, granulated sugar, and things like that. If stiffeners are exposed—a series of structural rings circling and reinforcing the tank—the vessel is uninsulated, generally operates in a warm climate, and often hauls flammables and combustibles. Ainsworth said, "That is what mine looks like without the designer dress" (the stainless mirror sheath). The double conical side view speaks of chemical hazmats. Since September 11, 2001, all these shapes have scattered more than fish.

"Since 9/11, people see a tanker and they think you've got nitroglycerin in it," Ainsworth said.

Responding to a suggestion that we use a Wal-Mart parking lot while making a visit in Laramie, he said, "There's no way I'm putting these hazmats in a Wal-Mart. People in places like that think the truck is going to explode." In the fall of 2001, near St. Louis, a cop in a weigh station asked what he was carrying. "Latex," said Ainsworth. "Latex is a hazardous commodity," said the cop, but let him go. In a weigh station near Boise with a tankful of phosphoric acid he got the "Park Bring Papers" sign, as did all trucks with hazmat placards after 9/11. Everywhere, though, drivers were being scrutinized even more closely than the contents of their tanks. Drivers quit "because they looked Middle Eastern and were stopped left and right." If not native born, drivers with hazmat endorsements on their licenses became subject to police checks. "At truck stops, you used to be able to drop your trailer and bobtail into town. Now they don't want that. Something may be ticking." Signs have appeared: "No Dropping Trailers." The asphalt pavement at many truck stops used to be laced with dolly slabs. If you wanted to drop your trailer and go off bobtailing, you used a dolly slab or you might regret it. The retractable landing gear that supports the front end of a detached trailer could sink deep into asphalt and screw you into the truck stop for an extended stay. Rectangles just large enough for the landing gear, dolly slabs were made of reinforced concrete.

September 11th did not create in Ainsworth a sensitivity to law-enforcement officers which was not already in place. He describes the introduction of photo radar as "another encroachment of our rights." On I-10 once in Florida, a cop pulled him over and tried to put a drug-sniffing dog in his cab. He said, "I'm allergic to dogs." The officer said, "It's O.K. We can spray the cab." Slowly, Ainsworth said, "I'm constitutionally allergic to dogs." The bear got the message. The bear, of course, had "run a make" on him—"a cop phrase for plugging me into the N.C.I.C." The National Crime Information Center is a system within the F.B.I. "A cop stops you, runs an N.C.I.C. on your license, your whole history—your hit-and-runs, your D.U.I.s, your drug arrests. He's ready to give you a field sobriety test—walk a straight line, et cetera. Around San Francisco, that's called the Bay Shore Ballet."

"What did the cop find in your record?"

"Zero. There's nothing that exists on me. We don't really believe in interviews with police. It just gums us up. I run a legal ship, and the equipment is well maintained." Ainsworth added that he can afford water-buffalo boots because he obeys the law, keeping the buzzards out of his wallet. Buzzards, a word of broad application, extends from police to the Department of Transportation and the Internal Revenue Service and beyond. In the argot of the road, D.O.T. stands for Death on Truckers.

A female police officer is a sugar bear. A honey bear. A diesel bear is a cop who deals with truckers only. On a surface street in Puyallup, Washington, we happened by a municipal cop parked in his police car. Ainsworth said, "That's a local. That's not a real bear. Truck drivers would say, 'That's not a full-grown bear.' "

It had been well over a decade since he had acquired his last speedo. At one time, he thought "speedos were merely a form of doing business," but he had completely changed his mind. Individual bears have idiosyncratic speed thresholds that range from zero to ten miles above the limit. So Ainsworth sets his cruise control exactly on the speed limit. "Cops are suspicious of everybody," he said as we were starting to roll from Charlotte. "You have to think like a cop." His thinking is assisted by his radio scanner, which homes on the highway bands for state police. In Malheur County, Oregon, he heard a bear on the scanner say that he had a dump truck in Vale and was going to weigh it on a portable scale. "Vital information," Ainsworth said. "It's vital for you to know where the predators are." He bought the scanner mainly to detect "bears in the air." How does he know they're in the air? "You learn cop talk: 'That blue truck in lane No. 3—we've got him at 82.5.' " On the Pennsylvania Turnpike he once heard an air bear say to five chase cars on the ground: "We're going home early. We've got our work done for today." In other words, a quota had been met. The quota mattered more than a full shift of the cops' contribution to safety. Speedos, evidently, were for them a form of strip-mining more profitable than bituminous coal. On I-15 in Idaho, after we met a four-wheeler getting a speedo on the shoulder from a bear with flashing lights, Ainsworth turned on the scanner. "We want to know everything about cops," he said. "We want to know if that cop is going to turn and come along behind us after signing the ticket." He did.

"On I-90 in Montana it was legal to go any speed until about two years ago," Ainsworth said. "Guys went a hundred miles an hour. There were too many wrecks. You'd need a big parachute to stop this thing at a hundred miles an hour. I wouldn't think of doing a hundred miles an hour. You're going to Beulah Land."

Backing blindsided at the Peterbilt dealer's in Missouri, he said, "Sometimes you do this by Zen." He had never been to driver school. "I'm a farm boy," he explained. "I know how to shift. There are two things you need to know: how to shift, and how to align yourself and maintain lane control—exactly how much space is on each side. In city traffic it's critical." In the open country of western Kentucky, he said, "Out here, you look way ahead. It's the same as steering a ship. There's a silver car about a mile ahead that I'm looking at now. When you steer a ship, you don't look at the bow, you look at the horizon. When I'm in a four-wheeler, I stay away from trucks, because if a tire blows or an entire wheel set comes off I'm going to Beulah Land."

Gratuitously, he added, "Atlanta has a lot of wrecks due to aggressive drivers who lack skill. In Los Angeles, there's a comparable percentage of aggressive drivers, but they have skill. The worst drivers anywhere are in New Jersey. Their life cannot mean a great deal to them. They take a lot of chances I wouldn't take—just to get to work on time."

From Harrisburg, North Carolina, to Sumner, Washington, the load in the tank behind us kicked us like a mule whenever it had a chance. The jolt—which he called slosh, or slop—came mainly on surface streets and on-ramps when gears were shifting at low speeds. On the open road, it happened occasionally when we were gearing down, mashing on the accelerator, stepping on the brakes, going downhill, or going uphill. Ainsworth minimized the slosh with skills analogous to fly casting. "You coördinate shifting with the shifting of the load," he said. "You wait for the slop or you can pretzel your drive line." The more ullage the more slop. The density of the monoethanolamine had allowed us to take only six thousand gallons in the seven-thousand-gallon tank. The ullage was the difference was the mule.

We would deliver it to Sumner after a day's layover in the Cascades. We were running twenty-four hours early. For the spectacular plunge in christiania turns down through the mountains from Snoqualmie Pass, Ainsworth's gear selection was No. 14 and his foot never touched the brake. The speed limit for trucks was, of course, restricted, but not by weight, causing Ainsworth to say, "They're not as bright as Oregon." The State of Washington was bright enough, however, to require that a truck stop in that beautiful forest of Engelmann spruce and Douglas fir be invisible from the interstate, right down to the last billboard. About thirty miles uphill from Puget Sound, we turned off I-90 at a nondescript exit, went through a corridor of screening trees, and into the Seattle East Auto Truck Plaza, where a free-standing coffee hut aptly named Cloud Espresso dispensed americano one-shots and mondo latte—truck-driver drinks, strong enough to float a horseshoe. In the lot, at least a hundred trucks were parked and humming. On one flatbed, a guy had a yacht he had hauled from Fort Lauderdale for a Seattle couple who had sailed around the Horn. He was getting ten thousand dollars to take the boat home.

As we began to roll on the second morning, I asked Ainsworth what time it was. He said, "0600 local." Sumner is down near Enumclaw and Spanaway, southeast of Tacoma. On Eighth Street East at 6:50 A.M., we turned into a large, elongate, and already busy lumbermill, where lanes were narrow among high piles of raw logs and stacks of lumber in numerous dimensions, from rough-cut ten-by-tens down. We saw a machine called a C-claw, or grappler (basically a crab's claw with a six-foot spread), go up to an eighteen-wheeler that had just arrived with fifty thousand pounds of fresh wood—forty-foot logs of Emperor fir. As if the huge logs were bundled asparagus, the big claw reached in, grabbed them all, and in one gesture picked up the entire fifty thousand pounds, swung it away from the truck, and set it on the ground.

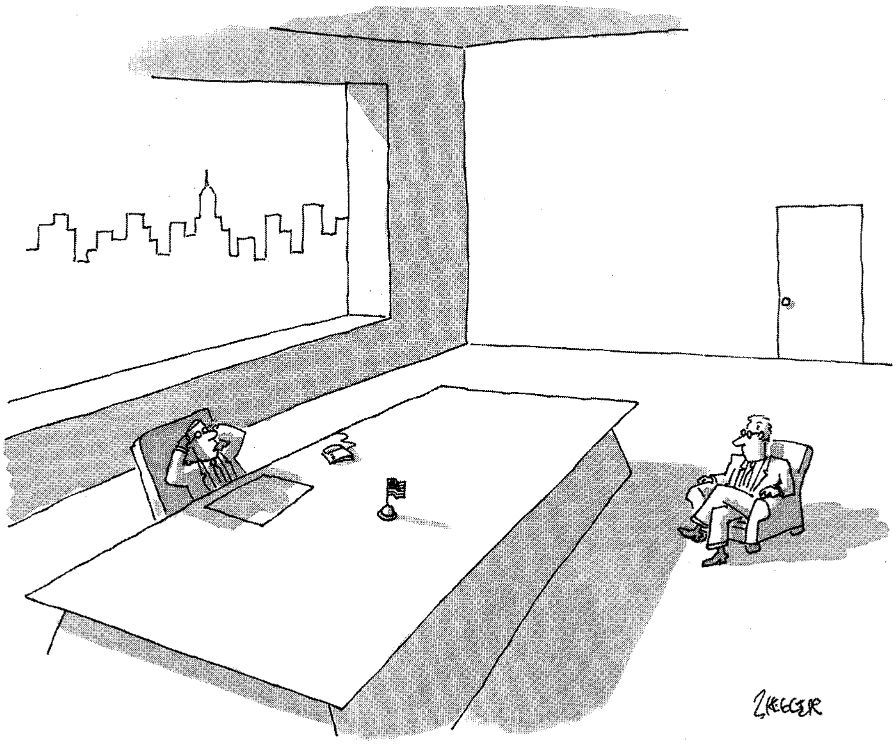
A man appeared from behind some stacked lumber and shouted, "You guys got chemical?"

"We're not here with his morning orange juice," Ainsworth muttered.

"Did you know you've got a hole in your tank?"

A living riot, this guy. He directed us to "the second dry shed" in the vast labyrinthine yard. It was a cloudless day. From the roof of that dry shed, you could have seen the white imminence of Mt. Rainier, twenty-five miles southeast. But we were soon parked under the roof and looking instead at a bomb-shaped horizontal cylinder rouged with rust. This was the destination to which he had hauled the monoethanolamine 2,884 miles. "What is the capacity of the tank?" Ainsworth asked. Answer: "It's big." Eventually, he determined that the receiving tank's capacity was nine thousand gallons. He got out his tire thumper and thumped the tank. "Sounds pretty empty to me," he concluded, and from tubes on his tanker he removed two twenty-foot hoses two inches thick and a ten-foot jumper with double female ends. He hooked them together and forced out the hazmat with compressed air. As the fixing preservative in pressure-treated wood, chromated copper arsenate and ammoniacal copper arsenate were being phased out by the pressure-treated-wood industry. Some people had built their houses entirely of pressure-treated wood, and from the arsenic in the preserving compounds the people were going the way of old lace. Adults had been hospitalized. Children were at particular risk. So arsenic compounds were out now, and we had brought the base of the broth meant to replace them. In an hour, the six thousand gallons were discharged. We climbed to the dome, Ainsworth eased it open, and we looked down into the vessel. There remained what turned out to be a pint and a half of heel. It was a very dark and glistening, evil-looking blue. If blood were blue, it would look like monoethanolamine.

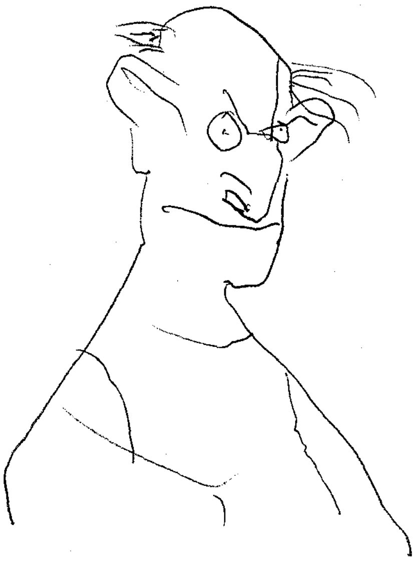
At 0900 local we were back on the road. Ainsworth was headed for a wash in Portland, and then would bounce to Kalama, near Kelso, and take a load of K-Flex 500 to Kansas City, and then bounce to Gastonia, North Carolina, for latex bound for White City, Oregon. From the lumbermill, he took me fourteen miles to the Flying J Travel Plaza, Port of Tacoma Truck Stop, Interstate 5. As he departed, the long steel vessel caroming sunlight was almost too brilliant to look at. I stood on the pavement and watched while the truck swung through the lot and turned, and turned again, and went out of sight. As it did, the Flying J's outdoor public-address system said, "Shower No. 636 is now ready." ♦

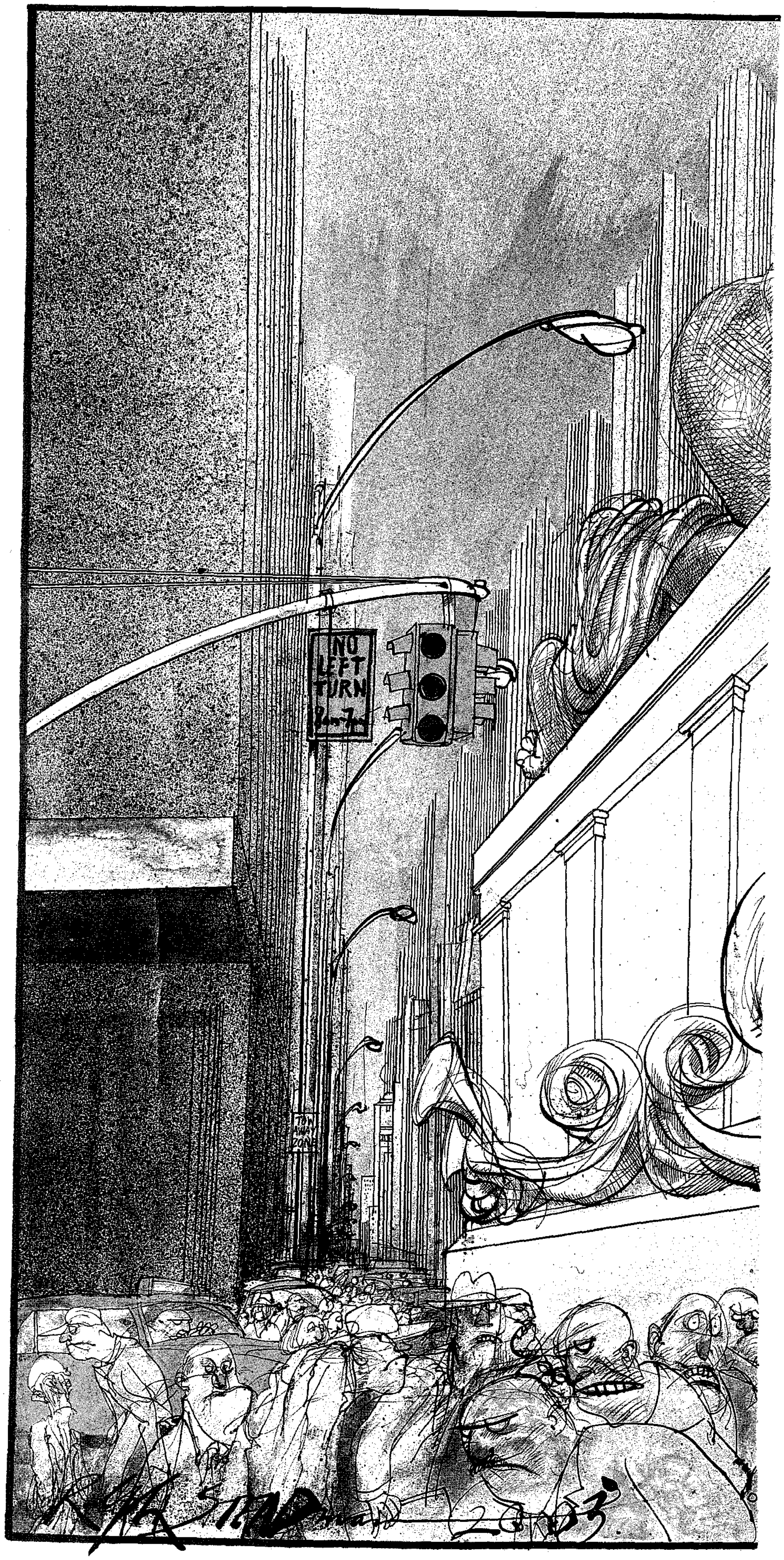


*"I do my part."*

PORTFOLIO BY
RALPH STEADMAN

# MIDTOWN TRAFFIC

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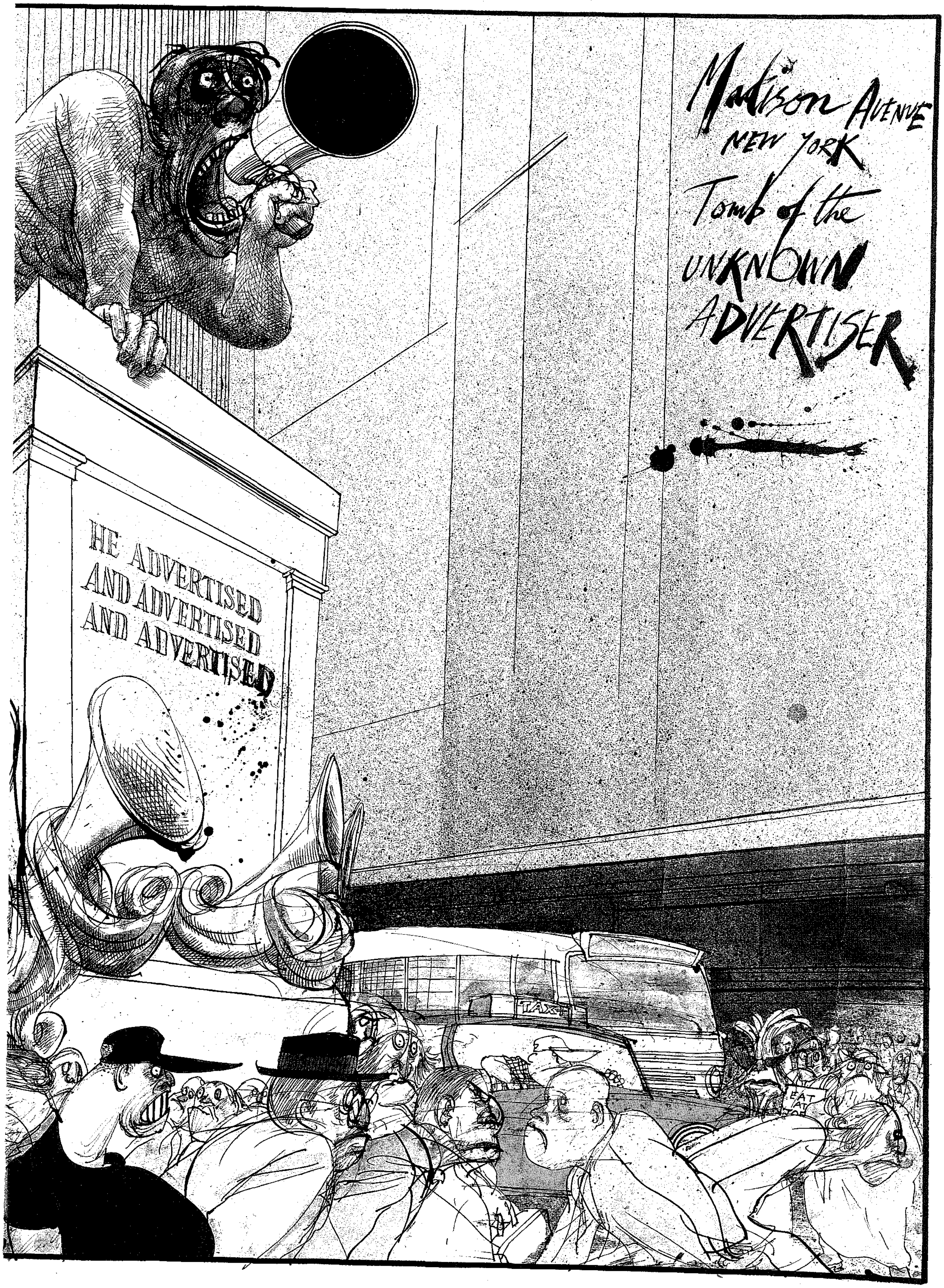
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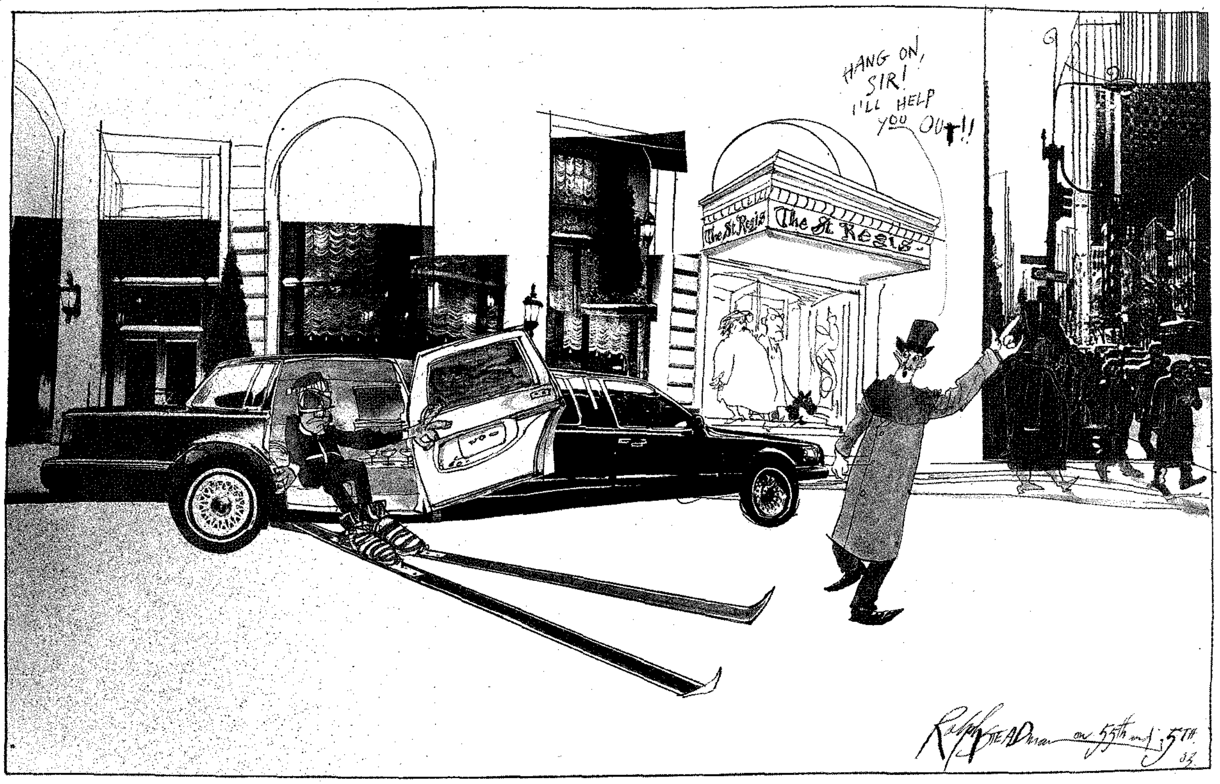
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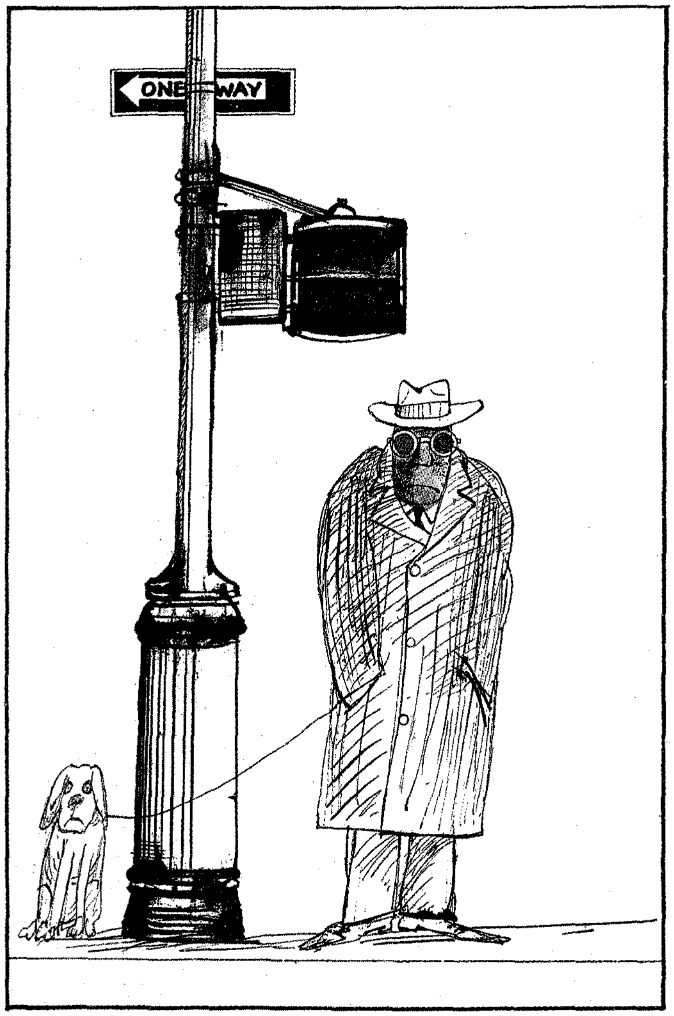
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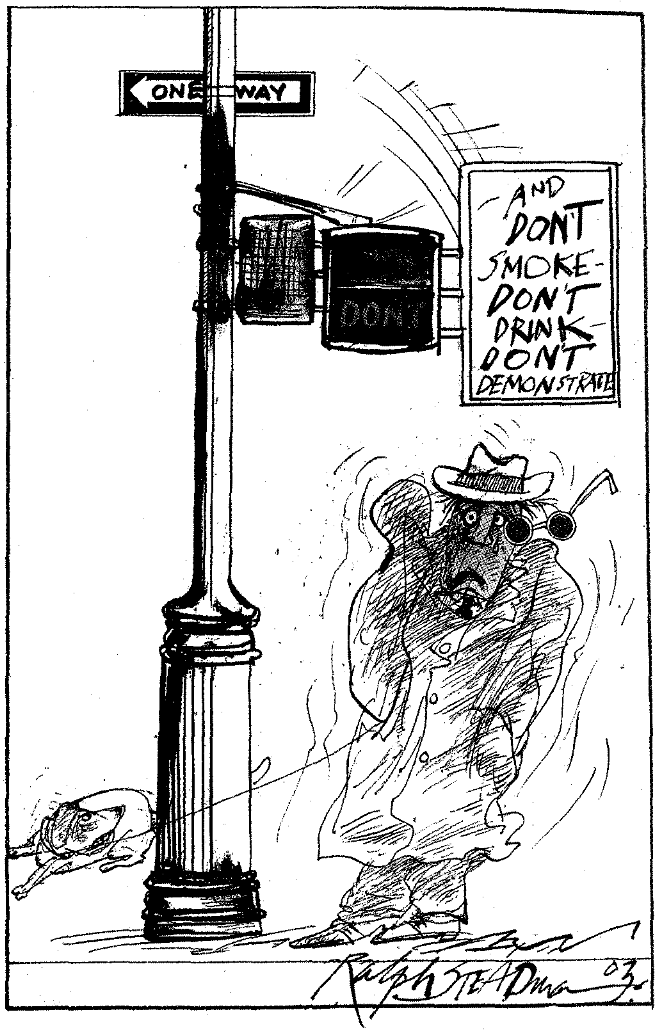
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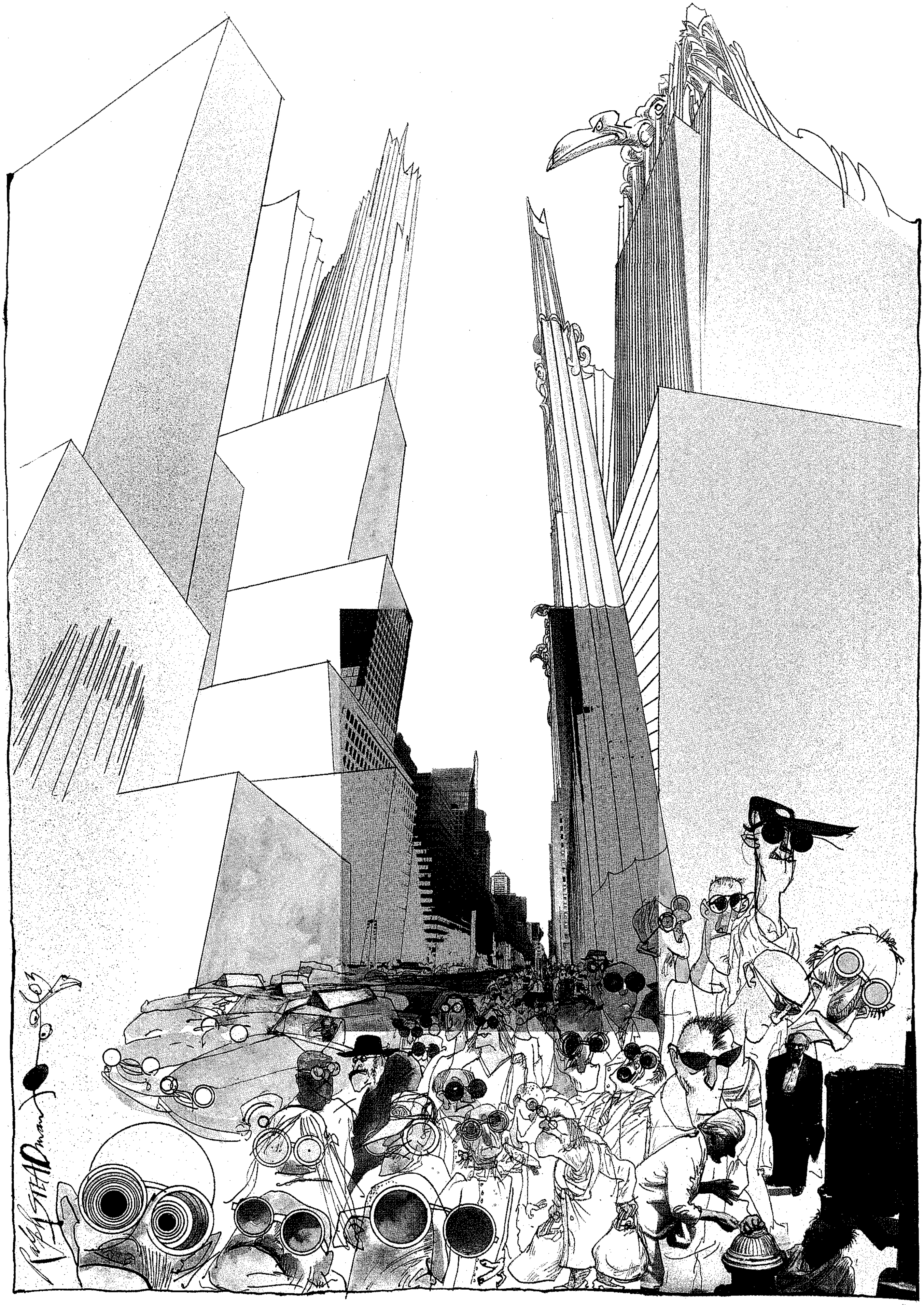
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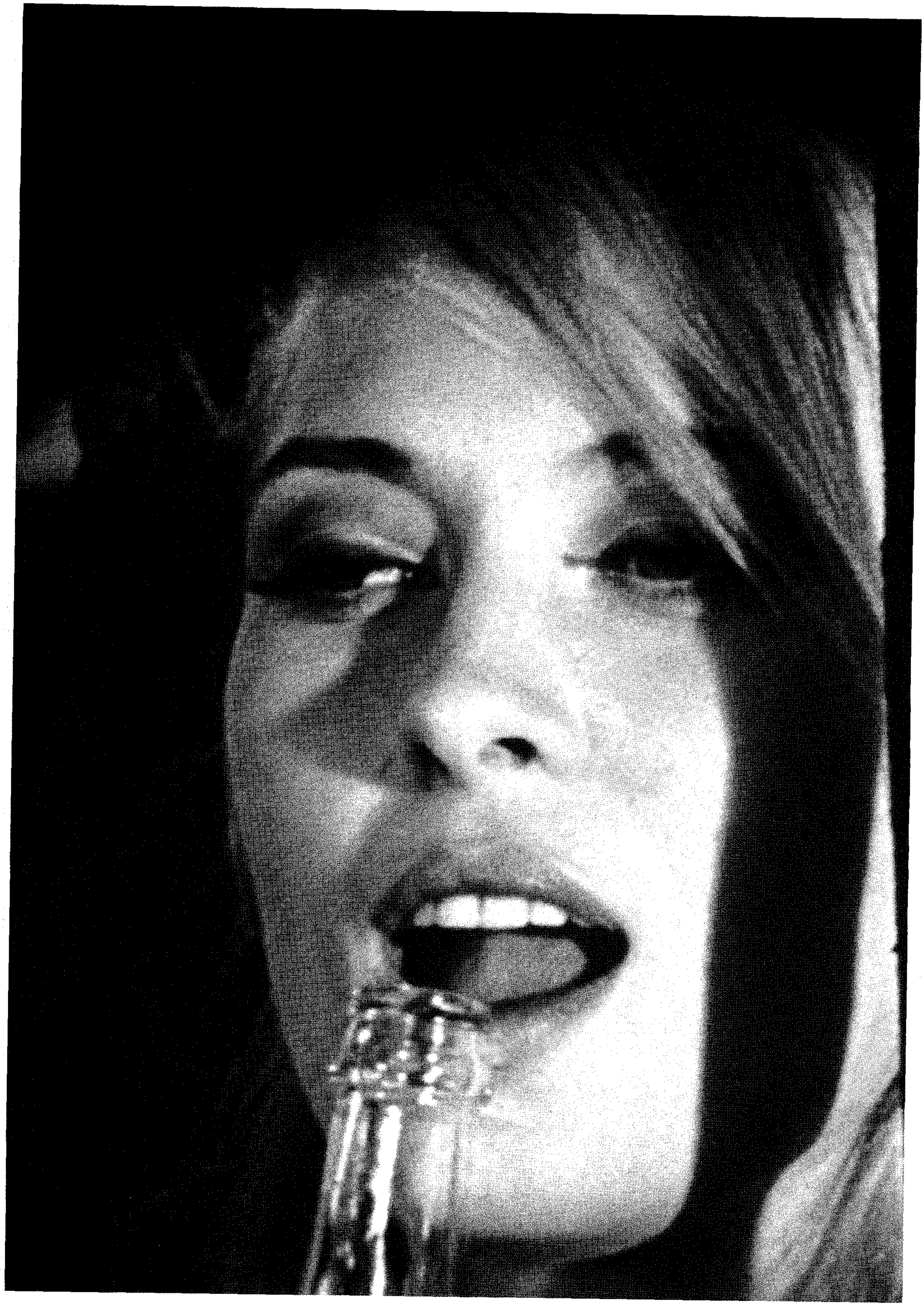


ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

# PARIS, TEXAS

*How Hollywood brought the cinema back from France.*

BY LOUIS MENAND

The cinema is a French invention. A French scientist, Étienne-Jules Marey, developed the technology; French manufacturers, the Lumières, produced the first commercial movies and, in 1895, held the first screenings; a French businessman, Charles Pathé, turned moviemaking into a mass-market industry. In 1910, two-thirds of the movies shown in the world were made in France. American audiences watched Westerns, imported from France, in which the Indians wore mustaches. The story of how the United States, over the next sixty years, came to dominate world cinema is largely the story of its rivalry with France.

The economics were not the hard part. The European movie business was twice wrecked by war, and Hollywood, with the energetic aid and encouragement of the American government, was quick to take advantage both times. Hollywood did not acquire its empire by accident: it had competitors, and it colonized or destroyed them all. The cinema, though, is not only a business. It is also an art. (The first person to say so, naturally, was a Frenchman, Edmond Benoît-Lévy, in 1907.) For many years, American moviemakers insisted that the movies were just entertainment, and amassed a fortune. Talk about "the artistic possibilities of the medium" did not interest them; most of them probably wouldn't have been able to keep up their end of the conversation even if it had. But at a certain point Hollywood was obliged to reinvent its product. This was an undertaking that required some attention to the artistic possibilities of the medium; and it turned out to be a subject to which the French had given serious thought. French movie culture changed American cinema. It helped make Hollywood the world capital of film; it also disposed of France as a cinematic rival, once and for all. By trying to become French, American movies became more American than ever. It sounds sensational to say that there was a single moment when this all happened, but there was. It happened in 1967, with "Bonnie and Clyde."

The French movie culture out of which "Bonnie and Clyde" eventually grew was created by two men who never worked together and did not particularly like each other: Henri Langlois and André Bazin. Langlois was a collector, a schemer, and an unkempt whirling dervish. In 1936, when he was twenty-one, he and a friend, Georges Franju, started a society dedicated to the exhibition and preservation of film—the Cinémathèque Française. Langlois was a connoisseur (he was French, after all), but he was the sort of connoisseur who needs to try everything, and he devoted the rest of his life to the pursuit and capture of every piece of film ever shot, along with posters, costumes, set designs—anything connected to the movies. He travelled everywhere in search of films, helped set up film libraries around the world, and, in later life, grew very fat.

Bazin, on the other hand, was an intellectual and a man of saintly disposition. The great influence on his thought was Emmanuel Mounier, the founder of the journal *Esprit* and an exponent of

*Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" was one of the French New Wave movies that inspired the makers of "Bonnie and Clyde."*

OPPOSITE: NEAL PETERS COLLECTION; ABOVE: COURTESY WELLSPRING MEDIA

personalism, a kind of spiritual alternative to existentialism, in which inner experience counts as more real than external facts, intuition more meaningful than analysis, feelings truer than concepts. Bazin had hoped to become a teacher, but he failed his oral examination because of a bad stutter, and in 1941, with a Sorbonne philosophy student named Jean-Pierre Chartier, he began a film club, and discovered a vocation. Bazin suffered from tuberculosis and, for the last four years of his life, leukemia, but from 1941 until his early death, in 1958, he wrote, lectured, and organized film discussion groups incessantly.

Running film societies in Paris in 1941 entailed some complications. Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, was obsessed with movies; he considered them prime weapons in the war of mass psychology. When the Germans occupied France, in 1940, Goebbels set about confiscating prints, purging the French film industry of Jews, closing down film clubs, and flooding French screens with German movies—mostly knockoffs of Hollywood productions, which he had encouraged German filmmakers to imitate. He did not shut down the French movie industry, though; it produced two hundred and twenty movies during the Occupation, including Henri-Georges Clouzot's thriller "Le Corbeau" (1943) and Marcel Carné's classic of classic French cinema, "Children of Paradise" (1945).

Langlois and Bazin also survived. Before the war, Langlois had made friends with Frank Hensel, the director of the Reichsfilmarchiv, who showed up in Paris in 1940 as the director of cinema for the German Army; Hensel provided protection for the Cinémathèque, and got Langlois movies the Germans were supposed to have confiscated. Bazin's film club was allowed to continue because it was housed in a center that had been modelled on the centers for Fascist youth groups in Germany. Chartier, Bazin's partner, refused to watch German movies, and he left in 1943 to join the Resistance fighters in the French Alps. But Bazin did go to German movies, and he even screened films by G. W. Pabst and Fritz Lang for the club. Though he was anti-Fascist, he refused to join the Resistance. His heart belonged to the cinema.

After the Liberation, Bazin became a prolific film critic, and in his reviews and essays he developed a philosophy of cinema derived from personalism. It was a rather beautiful enlacement of individualism and self-denial. The mission of the cinema, Bazin argued, is to represent the world, but the world as it is seen under the pressure of a personal vision. The moviemaker is not supposed to slice, dice, and re-splice reality by the usual cinematic techniques, though. That's not what "vision" means. The world we see in the movie is the world we see; the camera does not make its presence felt. What is conveyed, by the organization and the sequence of shots, the "mise en scène," is the spirit—the inner life, intuition, feeling—of the person who made it.

*"I don't feel quite as fulfilled when I've saved a lawyer."*

This view has some radical practical consequences. It led Bazin to attack the technique that, since Eisenstein, had been taken to be almost definitive of the medium, montage. In the famous Odessa Steps sequence in "The Battleship Potemkin," the illusion of a man being shot in the eye is created by splicing together two separate shots, of a gun firing and of a bloody eye. That the gun could have been fired on Tuesday and the bloody eye filmed on Wednesday doesn't matter; onscreen, the events appear to be contiguous. In real life, though, no one sees that way. What you see is a single action from one point of view, the point of view of the individual spectator. Bazin therefore became a great champion of Jean Renoir, whose long, nonjudgmental takes in movies like "The Rules of the Game" seem to open the world to our gaze, and of Orson Welles, whose use, in "Citizen Kane" and "The Magnificent Ambersons," of deep focus—single shots that maintain the foreground, middle distance, and far distance in continuous focus—allowed actions and reactions to unfold without cuts.

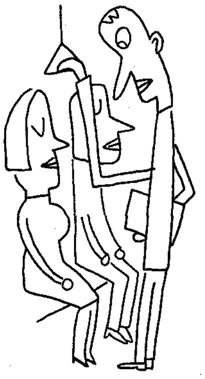
Meanwhile, the Cinémathèque was becoming the premier film society in a city that, after 1944, was suddenly bursting with film societies and infatuated with the movies. Langlois didn't have a theory of cinema, but he did have a theory of programming. He showed silent films without music, and foreign films without subtitles. He designed triple bills based on unobvious similarities between movies of different genres, periods, and nationalities. The effect was to train people to concentrate on the visual elements of film—lighting, camera placement, editing, and so on. It taught viewers to rate the mise en scène above the dialogue, the story, or the "message."

The trigger for the epidemic of movie madness that seized Paris after the war was the return of Hollywood. Between 1939 and 1944, the American movie industry made 2,212 movies (about ten times as many as the French). The Germans had banned American movies in occupied Europe, so that by 1944 there was a Niagara of celluloid poised to descend on the screens of liberated France. And the American government made certain that France would not be disappointed. It tied its forgiveness of war debt and its postwar loans to a trade agreement concerning a single American commodity: motion pictures.

The Blum-Byrnes Agreement, signed in 1946, specified the terms of American financial assistance to France and imposed a quota system for the import of American movies. Four weeks out of every thirteen were reserved for French-made movies. The other nine weeks were dedicated to "open competition"—which meant, effectively, American movies, since they were cheaper for theatres to rent (the studios, having already recouped their costs in the United States, could underprice most of the competition), and since they were movies that the public was eager to see. The agreement went into effect on July 1, 1946; that month, twenty-six Hollywood movies opened in Paris, including "The Invisible Man Returns" (1940), "How Green Was My Valley" (1941), "Citizen Kane" (1941), "The Maltese Falcon" (1941), "Stormy Weather" (1943), and "Laura" (1944). And the hits kept on coming, month after month. Over the next two and a half years, 1,576 American movies were licensed for exhibition in France, against five hundred and fifty-three movies made in other foreign countries and just two hundred and thirty-three movies made in France.

The French were in the middle of one of their intermittent love affairs with American culture. "The greatest literary development in France between 1929 and 1939," Sartre claimed, "was the discovery of Faulkner, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Caldwell, Steinbeck." During the Occupation, the Café de Flore was the headquarters for a black market in American novels; as soon as the war was over, Marcel Duhamel, a translator of Steinbeck and Hemingway and an associate of the Surrealists, created, for Gallimard, what proved to be an amazingly popular series of hardboiled detective fiction, mostly in translation, the *série noire*. (It is still published, and now lists more than twenty-six hundred titles.)

What French highbrows loved in American culture was the lowbrow element. Gangsters, criminals, derelicts, Hemingway's battered prizefighters, Faulkner's incestuous Southerners, Wright's angry black men: they seemed rebukes to the analytic refinement of the French tradition. ("The heroes of Hemingway and Caldwell never explain themselves," Sartre explained. "They act only.") The Hollywood movies that began arriving in France in 1946 had the same appeal. That was the year a French writer, Nino Frank, used the term "film noir" to describe the new American style. The French who admired noir films admired them in part for the mise en scène—the low-key lighting, the night-for-night shooting, the soundtrack screeching panic and dread—but in part because they were so not-French. Even the French movies that the French themselves called noir—"Pépé le Moko" (1937), "Le Jour Se Lève" (1939), "Le Corbeau"—seem talky and wan next to the films of Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Nicholas Ray, and Robert Aldrich. The French loved the Hollywood masters, too: Hitchcock, Hawks, and Welles, filmmakers whose technical resourcefulness was astonishing to French cinephiles.



Then the Cold War hit France. The French Communist Party was not large—it had about four hundred thousand members in 1946—but it commanded enormous intellectual authority. The Communists had been as excited as everyone else by the return of American movies and had been generally coöperative in the effort to rebuild the French economy with American loans. But that was because Communists were still sitting in the government and had a working coalition with the Socialists. In May, 1947, the Socialist premier, Paul Ramadier, kicked the Communists out. The Communists responded by calling for France to align itself with the Soviet Union, and immediately went to work on the Blum-Byrnes Agreement, which they portrayed as a sellout to American interests. They had two convenient drums to beat: Coca-Cola and Hollywood.

The story of the French hysteria over the import of Coca-Cola is too rich to summarize. But the Communist argument against Coke was the same as its argument against Hollywood: American products put Frenchmen (winegrowers and moviemakers) out of work, and they infected the culture with capitalist trash. American films, the general secretary of the Party, Maurice Thorez, proclaimed in 1948, "literally poison the souls of our children, young people, young girls, who are to be turned into the docile slaves of the American multimillionaires." A Committee for the Defense of French Cinema was mounted; street demonstrations were organized. In 1948, the government, under pressure, renegotiated the film agreement, reserving a fifth week each quarter for French movies, and in 1949 a government agency, the Centre National de la Cinématographie, or C.N.C., began subsidizing French movies deemed to be of "quality."

The realignment killed the spirit of nonpartisanship that had been a legacy of the Resistance, and it turned American culture into a battleground. To admire Hollywood movies (except for John Ford's "The Grapes of Wrath," reputed to be a favorite of Stalin's) was to choose capitalism. Langlois and Bazin didn't think that way; cinema wasn't politics to them—it was cinema. But the lines were drawn. When the Communists took over the publication of one of the film journals Bazin had been writing for, *L'Écran Français* (*French Screen*), he was fired. In 1950, he made the break an open one by publishing, in *Esprit*, an article called "The Myth of Stalin in the Soviet Cinema," in which he declared his preference for the myth of Tarzan. A year later, along with the critics Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Lo Duca, he became a founding editor of the *Cahiers du Cinéma*, which is where the New Wave was born.

For people whose image of François Truffaut is based on the beatific scientist he plays in Steven Spielberg's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" (a great movie about movie love), or on his alter ego in "The 400 Blows," the sweet delinquent Antoine Doinel, the truth about his personality can be a little startling. Before he became a director, he was widely regarded as the most vicious critic in France. Truffaut was not the most original thinker in the New Wave group;

*"Braithwaite & Starbucks. How may we help you?"*

• •

Eric Rohmer and Jacques Rivette were its intellectual leaders. He was not, as a filmmaker, as iconoclastic as his friend Jean-Luc Godard. But he was the New Wave's enfant terrible. His attacks on other people's movies were so over the top that, in 1958, he was denied a press pass for the Cannes Film Festival.

Truffaut was a discovery, protégé, and surrogate son of André Bazin. They met in 1948, when Truffaut was sixteen and already a movie-obsessive. A week later, Truffaut's stepfather had him thrown in jail for stealing a typewriter (he needed the money for his film club), and Truffaut spent the next eight months in reform schools. When he got out, Bazin hired him as his personal secretary, and in 1953 he was made an editor at the *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

In the nineteen-fifties, the *Cahiers* stood for three things: contempt for postwar French cinema, the so-called Tradition of Quality movies being underwritten by the C.N.C. ("*le cinéma de papa*," Truffaut called them); the worship of Hollywood filmmakers, particularly Hitchcock and Hawks; and the *politique des auteurs*, the theory that the movies of important directors should be considered as a single body of work expressing, through the mise en scène, the director's personal vision. Though Bazin came to feel that his disciples, who spent a lot of time ranking directors, had taken his ideas too far, the *politique des auteurs* clearly descends from his personalist theory of film.

Today, these look like the principles of an enlightened avant-garde. In fact, the *Cahiers* critics were attacking French cinema from the right. This wasn't just because of their taste for American movies. The film journal *Positif*, started a year after the *Cahiers*, was also pro-Hollywood and auteurist—it was the first magazine in the world to identify Jerry Lewis as an auteur—but its politics were left-wing. It regularly referred to Truffaut as "the fascist." Truffaut attacked French movies for their fellow-travelling cant—for showing policemen and priests as invariably corrupt, for example. And the *Cahiers'* emphasis on movie form made it seem, to politically engaged critics, a bastion of reactionary aestheticism. But the *Cahiers* position, learned from Langlois and Bazin, was that although movies may be political, the cinema transcends politics.

The *Cahiers'* crusade against the French film industry was not based entirely on aesthetic grounds. Most of the *Cahiers* critics didn't want to be critics; they wanted to be filmmakers. But the film industry was notoriously a closed shop, and its personnel and productions were heavily regulated by the C.N.C. The *Cahiers* therefore assumed one of the roles available in postwar France, the role of resistance. The posture had resonance, because the fact that France had continued to produce films under Nazi supervision had cast a shadow of collaborationism over French cinema. In the sometimes bloody settling of accounts after the Liberation, the film industry had taken its share of hits. Clouzot was charged with committing an "indignity to France" for his nasty portrayal of a provincial village in "Le Corbeau," and was banned from the industry for life. (The ban was later lifted.) The beautiful star of "Children of Paradise," Arletty, was imprisoned for "horizontal collaboration" with an officer in the Luftwaffe. (Arletty had a memorable way of expressing her lack of repentance. "My heart belongs to France," she said, "but my ass belongs to the whole world.") The film historian Robert Brasillach was executed.

So when the first New Wave films came out—Truffaut's "The 400 Blows" (1959), about a boy who defies authority and ends by escaping from a reform school that looks a lot like a concentration camp, and Godard's "Breathless" (1960), about a car thief chased by the cops, betrayed by his girlfriend, and shot in the back—it was hard not to read them as allegories of resistance. They weren't just movies whose characters refused to submit. They were movies whose style—Truffaut's unexpurgated realism, Godard's jump cuts and vérité camerawork—was itself an act of resistance against the classic French cinema and the Tradition of Quality. "We are proud to have been and to remain a part of the New Wave," Truffaut said later, "just as one is proud to have been a Jew during the Occupation."

Still, the theory and the politics possibly obscure what the New Wave was really about. Most of the *Cahiers* critics didn't think that the New Wave began with "The 400 Blows." They thought that it began with Roger Vadim's "And God Created Woman," in 1956. "And God Created Woman" has only one interest, and it is not cinematic. Vadim (né Roger Vladimir Plemiannikov) had met Brigitte Bardot in 1949, when she was fifteen and already a cover girl for *Elle*. He married her in 1952, over the objections of her father, and dedicated himself to making her (as he put it) "the unattainable dream of every married man."

"And God Created Woman" was not Bardot's first movie—she had caused a small sensation in a movie called "The Light Across the Street," in 1955—but Vadim made certain that it would not be her last. She is completely naked in her first scene, and the camera seems, for most of the movie, glued to her crotch. Bardot *is* the mise en scène. Every part of her body pouts. In the story, which is as slight as decency permits, Bardot plays a sexual free agent. She sleeps with whom she pleases, behavior that is brought to an end only when her new husband (Jean-Louis Trintignant) slaps her around a little. (Vadim does not give the story a feminist reading.)

The *Cahiers* adored the film. Its critics made appreciative noises about Vadim's mise en scène, but it was the utter naturalness of Bardot's sexuality that got into their blood. "It is pointless to compliment Vadim for being ahead of his time, because all that has happened is that everyone else is behind while he is up-to-date," Godard wrote. Truffaut named "And God Created Woman" one of the "great films" of 1956. The *Cahiers* critics defended Bardot against all charges of self-sexploitation. She was their Marilyn. The movie's appeal was in no way damaged by the Vatican's decision to denounce it, and when it was brought to the United States it made four million dollars, shattering the record for European imports. Bardot became the public symbol of the new cinema. Her ass belonged to the whole world.

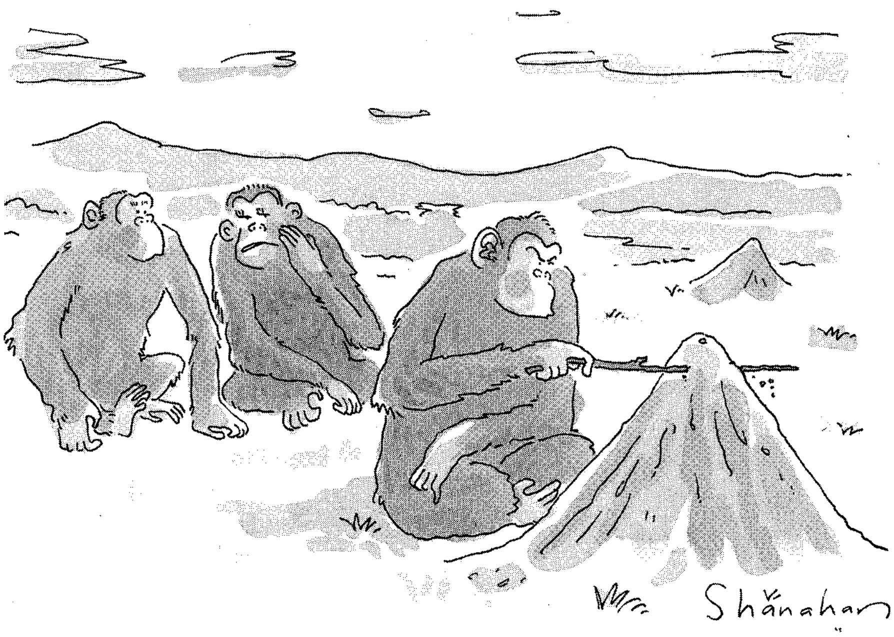
"Bonnie and Clyde" was written for Truffaut. The movie was the brainchild of Robert Benton and David Newman, who were both working at *Esquire* in the early nineteen-sixties, when the magazine was going through its transformation, under Harold Hayes and Clay Felker, into the flagship of the New Journalism. They were an odd couple—Newman is an outspoken New Yorker, Benton a gentle Texan—but they became best friends and creative partners. They devised many of the satirical features for which *Esquire* is known, including the Dubious Achievement Awards, and Newman became an all-purpose caption and headline doctor. He supplied the headline for Tom Wolfe's first piece of New Journalism, in 1963: "There goes (VAROOM! VAROOM!) that Kandy Kolored (THPHHHHHH) tangerine-flake streamline baby (RAHGHHHH!) around the bend (BRUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM . . . . . .)."

This was the time when the New Wave was breaking on the world's shores. "The 400 Blows" and "Breathless" were followed by Truffaut's "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960) and "Jules and Jim" (1962), Godard's "Une Femme Est une Femme" (1961) and "Vivre Sa Vie" (1962), Alain Resnais's "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961), Agnès Varda's "Cleo from 5 to 7" (1962). These were films Bazin would not necessarily have recognized as fruits of his theory. "Breathless" and "Shoot the Piano Player" are not movies about gangsters; they are movies about movies about gangsters—self-referential, allusive, playful with cinematic convention, and therefore perfect for film addicts like Benton and Newman.

Benton and Newman read Andrew Sarris, the critic who brought auteur theory to America, in the *Village Voice*. They knew Peter Bogdanovich, who wrote about Hollywood for *Esquire*, and was programming movies for the Museum of Modern Art. In 1963, he invited them to a Hitchcock retrospective. Bogdanovich produced a monograph for the show; earlier, he had written one on Hawks—the living gods of the *Cahiers* group. With this whole transplanted French film culture in their heads, Benton and Newman decided to leave the magazine and make movies. They figured that writing a screenplay was the best way to break into the business.

The idea to do the story of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, the couple whose gang went on a bank-robbing rampage in and around Texas from 1932 until 1934, when they were ambushed and shot dead by a police posse, came from a book about gangsters of the John Dillinger era that Newman and Benton had both happened to read. Benton already knew about Bonnie and Clyde, because they were folk heroes in the part of East Texas he was from. His father had attended their funeral.

The movie that Benton and Newman imagined was an amalgam of two New Wave types. They wanted a witty gangster picture, featuring cool anti-heroes, in the manner of Jean-Paul Belmondo, in "Breathless," and Charles Aznavour, in "Shoot the Piano Player," together with a romantic situation that would be a little outré, in the manner of the love triangle in "Jules and Jim." ("Jules and Jim" was a particular favorite of both men. The movie came out when Benton was ending a relationship with Gloria Steinem; he saw it, for purposes of consolation, eight times. Newman named his daughter Catherine after the character played by Jeanne Moreau.) So they wrote a gangster story with a ménage à trois: they put Bonnie and Clyde into a sexual threesome with the character who became C. W. Moss (played, in the movie, by Michael Pollard). Then they set about



*"He's never been very good with his hands."*

trying to get the treatment to Truffaut.

They were helped by an unusual woman named Helen Scott. Scott was born in New York but brought up in Paris, where her father was a correspondent for the Associated Press. She was a Communist organizer in the nineteen-thirties; during the war, she did broadcasts for the Free French from Brazzaville, in the Belgian Congo. (Her boat was torpedoed en route.) She served as press attaché for Justice Robert Jackson, the lead prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, was blacklisted in the McCarthy era, and, in 1959, became director of public relations for the French Film Office, in New York City. She met Truffaut in 1960, when he came for the American distribution of "The 400 Blows," and, despite the differences in their political commitments, they became close friends.

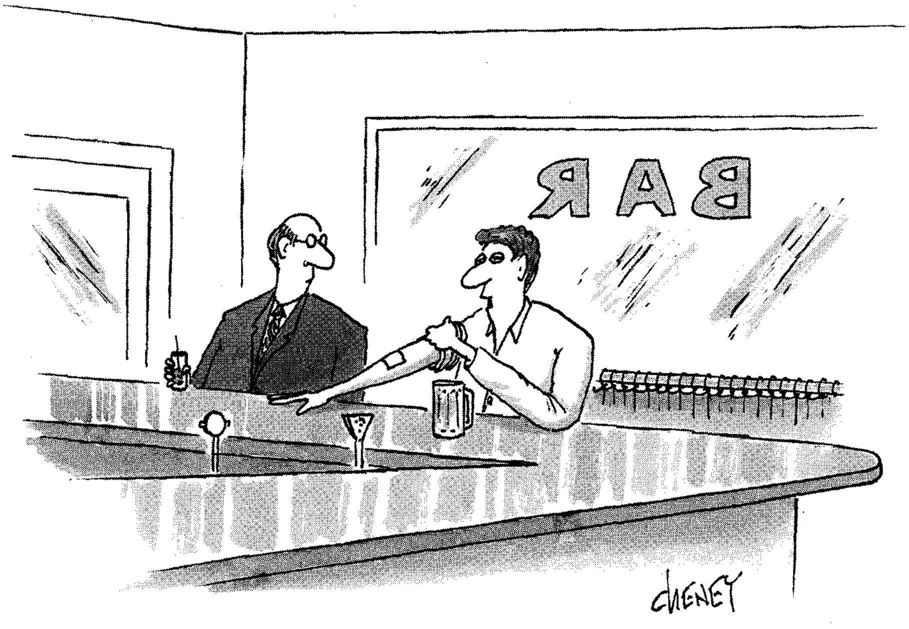
Benton and Newman knew Scott from their *Esquire* days, when she provided them with stills of French movies to use in the magazine. She agreed to send their treatment to Truffaut, who, after he had had it translated, announced that he was interested. He already knew the Bonnie and Clyde story. It had been the subject of a comic strip ("Un Ménage de Gangsters") by Paul Gordeaux in the newspaper *France-Soir* in 1962, which Truffaut had clipped. When he received the treatment, he was trying to put together a deal to direct "Fahrenheit 451" for Universal, but he could see the appeal of a small-budget project, particularly since his English was nonexistent, and he agreed to a meeting. In 1964, the three met in New York at the Drake Hotel, with Scott present as translator, and Truffaut went over the treatment, showing Benton and Newman how to block the movie out, and making a series of suggestions. He screened a classic film noir for them, Joseph Lewis's "Gun Crazy" (1949), also the story of a couple who rob banks, in order to point out how the ending, where they die in a shoot-out with the police, had been mishandled. When the lights came up, Newman and Benton saw that Jean-Luc Godard had been sitting in the screening room with them.

After Truffaut decided to make "Fahrenheit 451," he passed their screenplay along to Godard. Godard, too, flew to New York to discuss the project. In order to finance their research, Newman and Benton had sold an option on the movie (retaining the right of director approval) to a brother-and-sister producing team, Elinor and Norton Wright. The Wrights were relatively untested—Norton had been an assistant producer on "Captain Kangaroo." They were not prepared for Godard, and Godard was not prepared for them. The concept of "the package" was beyond his grasp. He thought that the producer was the person who wrote the checks, which was the way it worked in France. He did not understand that the Wrights would have to go to a studio for the money, and he grew increasingly exasperated during the meeting. He could start shooting in three weeks, he said. The weather would be bad in Texas, the producers explained. "We can make this picture anywhere," Godard replied. "We can make it in Tokyo." The producers called Texas for a weather report. Godard stood up. "I am talking about cinema, and you are talking about meteorology," he exclaimed, and walked out. Later, he called Newman and Benton from the airport. "Your producers are amateurs," he told them. "Give me a call when the option expires."

Truffaut happened to loathe Warren Beatty. "He seems to me an extremely unpleasant person," he confided to Elinor Wright. "He and Marlon Brando, and several others, are on a little list that I've classified in my head as 'Better not to make films at all than to make films with these people.' " But they met in France, where Beatty was making "Kaleidoscope," and Truffaut recommended Benton and Newman's screenplay. Beatty looked up the writers when he was back in New York, and picked up the option. Benton and Newman made him talk to Godard. The meeting was in a London hotel, and, according to Newman, the chemistry was poor. "I met him," Beatty reported. "Forget about it."

Beatty had made a movie with Arthur Penn, "Mickey One," in 1965, and he approached Penn to direct. Penn knew what the New Wave was all about. He regarded "Mickey One" as an American New Wave effort (Alexandra Stewart, Truffaut's girlfriend at the time, was the movie's co-star), and he had had fights with producers over the editing of his pictures. He agreed to make the movie.

Beatty had never produced before. His career had been in a slump since his début, in "Splendor in the Grass" (1961), but the studios were in a slump, too. As Peter Biskind points out, in his terrific history of the period, "Easy Riders, Raging Bulls," in 1965 Adolph Zukor, who was ninety-two, and Barney Balaban, seventy-eight, were still on the board at Paramount; Jack Warner, at Warner Bros., was seventy-three; Darryl F. Zanuck, at Twentieth Century-Fox, was sixty-three. The studios had no idea what the sixties were about, and they had pretty much forgotten what the movies were about, too—a fact epitomized by Fox's farcical miscalculation (described by John Gregory Dunne in his classic



*"I used to give a damn, but now they have a patch for that."*

## FATHERS

Fathers are
more fathering
these days they have
accomplished this by
being more mothering

what luck for them that
women's lib happened then
the dream of new fathering
began to shine in the eyes
for free women and was irresistible

on the New York subways
and the mass transits
of other cities one may
see fatherings of many colors
with their round babies on
their laps this may also
happen in the countryside

these scenes were brand-new
exciting for an old woman who
had watched the old fathers
gathering once again in
familiar Army camps and com-
fortable war rooms to consider
the necessary eradication of
the new fathering fathers
(who are their sons) as well
as the women and children who
will surely be in the way.

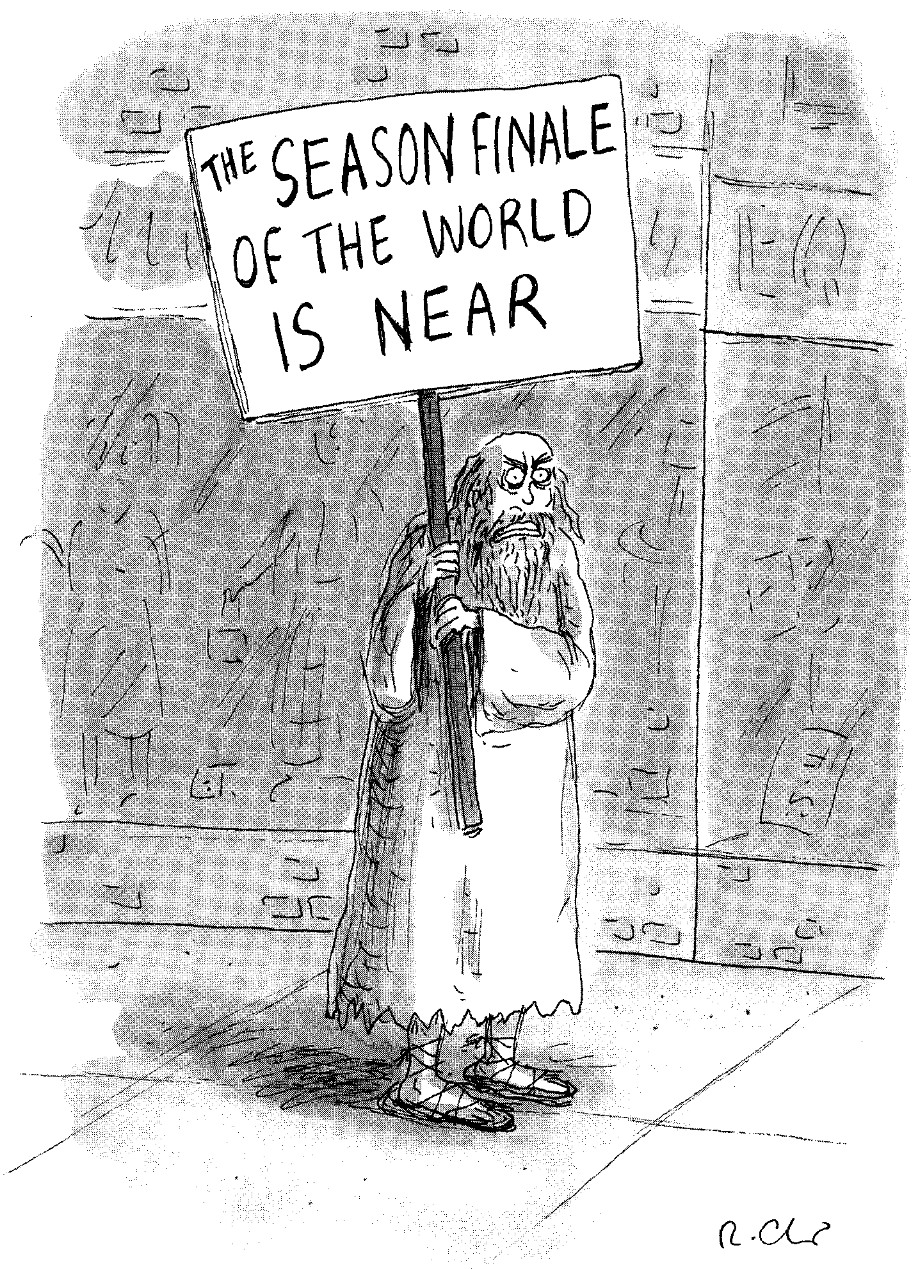
—*Grace Paley*

report "The Studio") with "Dr. Doolittle," starring Rex Harrison. The sense of confusion probably made it easier for Beatty to make his case. He managed to persuade Jack Warner, who had no taste for the project, to put up $1.6 million. Beatty took forty per cent of the gross. It turned out to be a very good deal. "Bonnie and Clyde" made nineteen million dollars in its first year and a half, and ultimately grossed a hundred and twenty-five million. Benton and Newman were paid a fee of seventy-five thousand dollars. There were no points.

The movie was shot on location in Texas. Newman and Benton's screenplay really did achieve the unsettling contrast of comedy and violence they intended—farce (Pollard, waiting in the getaway car, unable to resist grabbing a parking spot when one opens up) followed by terror (the closeup shooting of the bank teller who runs after the car). It's bluegrass (played by Flatt and Scruggs, the duo who recorded the theme song for "The Beverly Hillbillies") and blood. It was also brilliantly cast: Gene Hackman and Estelle Parsons, as Clyde's brother and sister-in-law, foils to the glamorous hicks Beatty and Dunaway; Gene Wilder, in his movie début, as the man who reveals, in a moment of giddiness after he decides that the gangsters who have kidnapped him are just fun-loving folks, that he is an undertaker; and, as the fifth member of the gang, Pollard (a good friend of Beatty's—they had worked together on the television series "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis"). Pollard's C.W. was, for sixties audiences especially, recognizably the perfect hanger-on, the sort of guy who will try any drug, in any amount, you might offer him. Newman and Benton had imagined a farm-boy stud in the part, in keeping with the idea of a ménage à trois. But, by the time the filming started, the ménage idea had been dropped. It is hard to imagine that the movie would have been as popular if it had kept that kink.

Popularity was not immediate. Jack Warner hated the film. "What the fuck is this?" was his comment after Beatty screened the finished picture for him. Beatty suggested that "Bonnie and Clyde" might be thought of as an homage to the Warner gangster movies of the thirties, like "Public Enemy." "What the fuck's an homage?" Warner said. The studio opened the picture small, in the late summer of 1967, and that was when the New Wave ran into the Old Wave. The leading antagonist was the *Times*. Bosley Crowther had been the *Times*' movie critic since 1940, and he was the great enemy of what used to be called gratuitous sex and violence: he thought that "The Jungle Book" (1942) was too violent. On top of that, Beatty had committed an uncharacteristic faux pas and insulted Crowther one night at Sardi's. (The story sounds more and more like "Sweet Smell of Success.") Crowther called "Bonnie and Clyde" "a cheap piece of bald-faced slapstick that treats the hideous depredations of that sleazy, moronic pair as though they were as full of fun and frolic as the jazz-age cut-ups in 'Thoroughly Modern Millie.' " The movie was panned in *Life*, *The Saturday Review*, and *The New Republic*. "The real fault with 'Bonnie and Clyde' is its sheer, tasteless aimlessness," said *Time*. Joe Morgenstern, in *Newsweek*, called it "stomach-turning," "a squalid shoot-'em-up for the moron trade."

There were some revisionist flutters. After he wrote his review, Morgenstern took his wife, the actress Piper Laurie, to see "Bonnie and Clyde" in New York, and this time, feeling the audience's excitement, he was swept away. He asked *Newsweek* for space to publish a retraction, which appeared the following week. He had been wrong, he said. He now saw that the combination of "gratuitous crudities with scene after scene of daz-


THE SEASON FINALE OF THE WORLD IS NEAR

zling artistry" made the movie important. Morgenstern was a good friend of Pauline Kael's—they lived two blocks from each other, on the Upper West Side—and Biskind suggests that Kael put him up to the retraction. Morgenstern says it isn't so: that he had already written it before they discussed the movie.

Then Kael herself weighed in. In 1967, she was a freelancer. She composed a seven-thousand-word defense of "Bonnie and Clyde" for *The New Republic*, but *The New Republic* killed it, so she sold it to *The New Yorker*, where it appeared in October. (The magazine's decision is odd, since Penelope Gilliatt had already given the movie a favorable review in her regular column.) Kael understood what the movie was all about, because she had taken Newman and Benton to lunch before she wrote her piece. She was therefore able to explain that "Bonnie and Clyde" combined comedy and horror because "the young French directors discovered the poetry of crime in American life (from our movies) and showed the Americans how to put it on the screens in a new, 'existential' way." She was also able to "guess" that Newman and Benton, "whose Bonnie seems to owe so much to Catherine in 'Jules and Jim,' had more interesting ideas about Bonnie's and Clyde's (and maybe C.W.'s) sex lives." Amazing. How did she know?

Still, the movie was gone from theatres in America, and Kael's reconsideration did not bring it back. It came back because *Time*, in December, ran a Robert Rauschenberg collage of images from "Bonnie and Clyde" on the cover. The story inside explained that "Hollywood has at long last become part of what the French film journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* calls 'the furious springtime of world cinema.' " The new attention enabled Beatty to persuade Warner's to rerelease the film. The day it reopened, it received ten Academy Award nominations.

Most of the controversy was about the violence, and this reflects Penn's contribution. Penn knew that he had a chance to do something new, because Mike Nichols's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (1966)—the first Hollywood movie in which the word "screw" is used outside a home-improvement context—had shown the old Production Code to be a moral dinosaur. The Code was in limbo in 1967 (in 1968, it was replaced by the ratings system), and Penn seized the opportunity. The Code had been interpreted to mean that a director could not show a gun firing and a person being hit in the same shot. In essence, it mandated montage. This explains the shock that audiences felt in 1967 when they saw in one shot Clyde's gun firing and the bank teller being hit in the face. No one had ever seen that effect before.

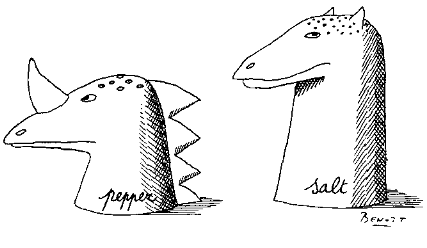
In their treatment, Benton and Newman had specified that the massacre of Bonnie and Clyde, at the end of the movie, "takes just seconds." "*At no point* in the gunfight do we see Bonnie and Clyde in motion," they insisted. "We never see Bonnie and Clyde dead." Penn thought that this was too abrupt, so he contrived his celebrated ending, Bonnie's and Clyde's bodies twitching agonizingly, in various degrees of slow motion, as the bullets mow them down. Penn used four cameras, filming at different speeds, and spliced the sequence with real-time sound. Since under the Code the camera was not allowed to rest on a dead body, the ending caused a sensation, and Penn's slow-motion/real-time technique for violent scenes has been used in Hollywood ever since.

As Bonnie and Clyde drive up to the scene of the ambush, he is wearing a pair of sunglasses with one lens missing. It's an allusion to one of the last scenes in "Breathless," where Belmondo, the hapless car thief infatuated with an American girl (Jean Seberg) who is almost as feckless and empty-headed as he is, wears sunglasses with a missing lens while he lounges around trying vaguely to come up with a way out of his predicament. The ending of "Bonnie and Clyde," too, recalls Belmondo's solo dance of death, as he staggers down a long Paris street before he collapses and dies, with the *flics* staring down at him contemptuously. The reality that the movies made under the Code denied is that when people are shot they are in pain. Penn—as Benton has said—created an aesthetic to express this truth.

The decision to drop the ménage à trois and to make Clyde impotent instead gave all the sexual power in the story to Dunaway. In the weeks before shooting began, Dunaway had to lose thirty pounds, which she had put on while making "Hurry Sundown," with Otto Preminger, and when she saw the first day's rushes she was so upset about the way she looked that she ran off and hid in a field. But she understood the chance she had been given, and she is the star of the picture. Her opening scene—she's naked on the bed, her brown hair dyed blond, her lips made up in a pout, exhibitionistic, sexually restless—is the opening of "And God Created Woman" transported from fifties Saint-Tropez to thirties Texas. The thin dress she throws on after she sees Clyde out the window, casing her mother's car, and runs downstairs to meet him, is like the shifts Bardot sashays around in in Vadim's movie. (This scene gave Beatty trouble with the censor from the Catholic Legion of Decency, who was sure that Dunaway was not wearing panties.) When she stroked Clyde's pistol and sucked on her Coke bottle, the New Wave had truly come to America.

Bardot appreciated the reference. She and her new boyfriend, the singer and songwriter Serge Gainsbourg, performed "The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde" on French television before the movie had even been seen in France. Bardot was wearing the kind of clothes (designed by Theadora Van Runkle, who was nominated for an Oscar) that the movie had made popular. "Bonnie and Clyde" opened in Paris to enormous attention. The stars rode to the première in antique cars; all the mannequins in the shopwindows they passed were wearing Bonnie-and-Clyde outfits—double-breasted suits, midiskirts, berets. The movie revived the French beret industry. A "Bonnie and Clyde" number was performed at a famous strip club, the Crazy Horse Saloon. The British opening was also a smash: the Warner Theatre in Leicester Square reported the biggest one-day box-office in its thirty-three-year history. Afterward, Penn and Beatty were sitting in a restaurant in London when Penn thought he recognized Dunaway sitting at another table. The woman was wearing a beret and a Bonnie Parker blouse. She turned out to be Brigitte Bardot.

"Bonnie and Clyde" was a hit in France, but, except for fashion, it did not affect French culture. This was in part because the countercultural appeal that the movie enjoyed in the United States—outlaw family against the System—didn't mean much to the French, who had not yet been touched by the counterculture. But it was also because, cinematically, the French had already been there. The worst notices that "Bonnie and Clyde" got were in the *Cahiers du Cinéma*. "The era (roaring twenties) is just a cunning pretext for unleashing a violence that is as aseptic as it is profitable," its critic, Michel Delahaye, wrote, not bothering even to get the decade right. "The director has such contempt for his characters that he treats them as though they were retarded." He rated the movie "*Inutile de se déranger*"—French for "Must to avoid." Godard did not have much use for what Penn had done, either. He called Newman and Benton. "Now that we have Penn's version," he told them, "it's time to do ours." Truffaut was disgusted by the decision to eliminate the ménage à trois. "Beatty had no genuine innocence, no authenticity," he complained. "He distorted the script out of fear of being ridiculed."



Two weeks after "Bonnie and Clyde" opened in Paris, André Malraux, de Gaulle's Minister of Culture, had Langlois fired from the leadership of the Cinémathèque. There were protests and fights in the streets (Helen Scott was knocked down in one), until, in April, Langlois was reinstated. A week later, the riots of May, 1968, broke out. Godard became a Maoist, the *Cahiers* became Marxist, and French movie culture never recovered. Today, European cinema in the United States has almost evaporated. In the sixties, European films accounted for five per cent of the American box-office, and American films for thirty-five per cent of the European box-office. By the mid-nineties, European films accounted for half of one per cent of the box-office here, and Hollywood movies generated eighty per cent of movie revenue in Europe. Only the subsidy system keeps French cinema alive.

"Bonnie and Clyde" is not really a New Wave movie, of course—any more than "Shoot the Piano Player" and "Breathless" are really noir or gangster movies. ("It belongs with 'Alice in Wonderland,' " Godard later said of "Breathless." "I thought I was making 'Scarface.' ") There is nothing self-reflexive or frame-breaking in "Bonnie and Clyde." It is a Hollywood movie, with stars and cars and lots of guns. Beatty is an entertainer, and, in the end, it's Beatty's movie. But it is serious entertainment, made by people who knew something about the medium. And it changed American movie culture. Three months after his review of "Bonnie and Clyde" was published, Crowther was replaced as the *Times* movie critic by Renata Adler, who was twenty-nine years old. A few months later, Kael was hired as a film critic at *The New Yorker*, where she presided over the Hollywood New Wave—the period, from 1968 to 1980, of Coppola, Scorsese, Altman, Kubrick, Mazursky, Bogdanovich, and Ashby, a period of movie violence and movie sex and movie wit and movie love. Those directors' films did not "save Hollywood"; Hollywood was saved by "The Exorcist" and "The Towering Inferno" and "Jaws." But they restored its credibility. They brought the cinema back to America. ♦

FICTION

# THE TEMPLE

BY GAO XINGJIAN

We were deliriously happy, delirious with the hope, infatuation, tenderness, and warmth that go with a honeymoon. Fangfang and I had planned the trip over and over, even though we had only half a month off: ten days of wedding leave, plus one week of additional work leave. Getting married is a major event in life, and for us nothing was more important, so why not ask for some extra time? That director of mine was so miserly: anyone who went to him requesting leave had to haggle; there were never automatic approvals. The two weeks I had written in my application he changed to one week, including a Sunday, and it was with reluctance that he said, "I'll expect you to be back at work by the due date." "Of course, of course," I said. "We wouldn't be able to afford the salary deduction if we stayed longer." It was only then that he signed his name, thereby granting us permission to leave.

I wasn't a bachelor anymore. I had a family. I would no longer be able to go off to restaurants with friends as soon as I got paid at the beginning of the month. I wouldn't be able to spend recklessly so that by the end of the month I didn't have the money to buy a pack of cigarettes and had to go through my pockets and search the drawers for coins. But I won't go into all that. I'm saying that I—we were very happy. In our short lives, there hadn't been much happiness. Both Fangfang and I had experienced years of hardship, and we had learned how it is in the world. During those catastrophic years in this country, our families suffered through many misfortunes, and we still resented, to some extent, the fate of our generation. But I won't go into that, either, for the time being. What was important was that we could now count ourselves happy.

DETAIL: DONALD MENNIE, "CHIEH T'AI SSU - WESTERN HILLS"/KLOTZ/SIRMON GALLERY

We had half a month's leave, and although it was only half a honeymoon, for us it couldn't have been sweeter. I am not going to go into how sweet it was. You all know about that and have experienced it yourselves, but this particular sweetness was ours alone. What I want to tell you about is the Temple of Perfect Benevolence: "perfect" as in "perfect union," and "benevolence" as in "benevolent love." But the name of the temple is not really of great importance. It was a dilapidated ruin, and certainly not a famous tourist attraction. No one knew about it, other than the locals, and I suspect that even the locals who knew what it was called were few. In any case, the temple we happened to visit wasn't one where people burned incense or prayed, and if we hadn't carefully examined the stone tablet with traces of writing in the drain of the water pump we wouldn't even have known that the temple had a name. The locals referred to it as "the big temple," but it was nothing compared with the Retreat for the Soul Temple, in Hangzhou, or the Jade Cloud Temple, in Beijing. Situated on a hill beyond the town, it was little more than an old two-story building with flying eaves and the remnants of a stone gate in front of it. The courtyard walls had collapsed. The bricks of the outer wall had been carried off by peasants to build their houses or construct pens for their pigs, and only a circle of unfired bricks remained, overgrown with weeds.

However, from a distance, from the small street of the county town, the expanse of glazed yellow tiles sparkling in the sunlight caught our eyes. We had come to this town quite by accident. Our train had stayed at the platform after the announced departure time, probably waiting for an express that was behind schedule to pass through. The chaotic scramble of passengers getting on and off had settled and, apart from the conductors chatting at the carriage doors, there was no one on the platform. Beyond the station was a valley with an expanse of gray roofs. Farther still, a chain of heavily wooded mountains gave the ancient town an exceptional air of tranquillity.

Suddenly I had an idea. I said, "Should we take a look at this town?"

Fangfang, who was sitting opposite and looking at me lovingly, gave a slight nod. Those eyes of hers seemed to speak, and, sensitive to each other, we communicated on the same frequency. Without a word, we took our bags from the luggage rack and rushed to the door of our carriage. As soon as we had jumped onto the platform, we both laughed.

I said, "We'll leave on the next train."

"I don't mind if we don't leave at all," Fangfang answered.

After all, we were travelling, and it was our honeymoon. If we fell in love with a place we would go there, and if we went on liking the place we would stay longer. The happiness of newlyweds accompanied us all the time, wherever we went. We were the happiest people in the world. Fangfang was holding my arm, and I was holding our bags. We wanted the conductors on the platform and the countless pairs of eyes on the other side of the train windows to look at us with envy.

We no longer had to drive ourselves mad trying to get transferred back to the city. Nor did we have to keep appealing to our parents for help. And we didn't have to worry about our residential status or our jobs anymore. We even had our own apartment, our own home; it wasn't very big, but it was comfortable. You belonged to me and I belonged to you and, Fangfang, I know what you want to say: This relationship is no longer immoral! And what does that mean? It means that we want everyone to share in our happiness. We've had so many problems, and we've troubled all of you with them, and you have all worried because of us. How can we repay you? With some candies and cigarettes after our wedding? No, we are repaying you with our happiness. There's nothing wrong with what I'm saying, is there?

So that was how we came to this quiet old town in the valley. But, in truth, the town was nowhere near as tranquil as it had seemed when we were looking out of the train window. Below the gray roof tiles, the lanes and alleys were throbbing with activity. It was nine o'clock in the morning, and people were selling vegetables and rock melons and freshly picked apples and pears. The streets of county towns like this one aren't wide, so mule carts, horse carts, and trucks were all jammed together, the drivers cracking their whips and sounding their horns. Dust in the air, dirty water tossed out by vegetable stalls, melon skins on the ground, squawking hens flapping in the hands of their buyers: these were sights that made us feel close to the town.

It all felt so different from the time when we were graduates sent to work in the countryside. Now we were just visitors passing through; we were tourists, and the complicated relationships between the people here had nothing to do with us. Inevitably, this produced in us city-dwellers a sense of superiority. Fangfang was clutching my arm tightly and I was leaning close to her, and we could sense people's eyes on us. But we didn't

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belong to this town; we were from another world. We walked right by them, and they didn't gossip about us; they gossiped only about the people they knew.

Eventually, there were no more vegetable stalls and very few people. We had left the bustle and din of the market behind. I saw from my watch that it had taken us only half an hour to walk the length of the main road from the railway station. It was still early. It would have been an anticlimax just to return to the station and wait for the next train, and Fangfang was already thinking about spending the night here! She didn't say so, but I could see that she was somewhat disappointed.

There was a man heading toward us, ostentatiously swinging his arms as he walked. He was probably a cadre.

"Excuse me, could you tell me how to get to the county hostel?" I asked.

He studied Fangfang and me for a moment, then enthusiastically pointed it out to us. "Go over there," he told us, "then head left. The red brick three-story building is the county hostel." He asked whom we were looking for, and he seemed to want to take us there himself. We explained that we were just tourists passing through and asked him if there were any sights worth seeing. He patted his head: this, it seemed, was a problem.

After giving the matter some thought, he said, "There actually aren't any scenic spots in this county. But there's a big temple up on the hill to the west of town, if you want to go there. You'll have to climb the hill, though, and it's steep!"

"That's O.K. We've come here so that we can go hiking," I said.

Fangfang hastened to add, "That's right. We're not afraid of climbing a hill."

At this, the man led us to the corner of the street. The hill was now directly in front of us, and on top of it, glazed tiles sparkling in the sun, was the old temple.

But then the man glanced at the high-heeled shoes that Fangfang was wearing and said, "You'll have to wade across a river."

"Is the water deep?" I asked.

"Above the knees."

I looked at Fangfang.

"That's nothing. I'll manage." She didn't want to disappoint me.

We thanked him and began walking in the direction he had indicated. When we turned onto the dusty dirt road, I couldn't help feeling somewhat regretful as I looked at the new high-heeled shoes with thin straps that Fangfang had on. Still, she charged ahead.

"You're really a crazy little thing," I said, catching up to her.

"As long as I'm with you."

Do you remember, Fangfang? You said this as you nestled against me.

We walked toward the riverbank. Corn grew straight, taller than a man, on both sides, and we followed a path through the green gauze canopy, with no one in sight either ahead or behind. Taking Fangfang in my arms, I gently kissed her. What's wrong with that? She doesn't want me to talk about that. So let's go back to the Temple of Perfect Benevolence. It was on the other side of the river, at the top of the hill. We could see tufts of weeds growing between the glistening yellow tiles.

The river was clear and cool. I held Fangfang's shoes and my leather sandals in one hand and Fangfang's hand in the other, while she scooped up her skirt with her free hand. Barefoot, we felt our way across. It had been a long time since I walked barefoot, so my feet were sensitive to even the smooth stones on the riverbed.

"Is it hurting your feet?" I asked Fangfang.

"I like it," you replied softly. On our honeymoon, even having sore feet was a happy sensation. All the misfortunes of the world seemed to flow away with the river water, and we returned for a moment to our youth. We frolicked in the water like mischievous children.

Fangfang leaped from rock to rock as I steadied her with one hand, and from time to time she hummed a song. After crossing the river, we started to run up the hill, laughing and shouting. Then Fangfang cut her foot and I was very upset, but she comforted me, saying that it was all right, it would be nothing as soon as she put on her shoes. I said that it was my fault, but she replied that she'd do anything to make me happy, even let her feet get cut. All right, all right, I won't go on about it. But because you are the friends we value most, who have shared our anxieties with us, we should also share our happiness with you.

It was in this way that we finally climbed to the top of the hill and arrived at the outer gate in front of the temple. Within the collapsed courtyard wall there was a gutter with pure water from the

places

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pump running through it. In what had been the courtyard, someone had planted a patch of vegetables, and next to it was a manure pit. We recalled the years that we had spent shovelling manure with production units in the countryside. Those difficult times had trickled away like water, and there remained some grief but also sweet memories, and there was our love, too. In the glorious sunlight, no one could interfere with this secure love of ours. No one would be able to harm us again.

Near the big temple there was also an iron incense burner. It was probably too heavy to move and too thick to break apart, so it continued to keep the old temple company, standing guard in front of the main door. The door was padlocked. Boards had been nailed over the rotten wooden lattice windows, but they, too, had rotted. The place was probably now being used as a storehouse for the local production team.

No one else was around, and it was very peaceful. We could hear the mountain wind moaning in the ancient pines in front of the temple, and, as there was no one to disturb us, we lay down on the grass in the shade of the trees. Fangfang rested her head on my arm, and we looked up at a thread of cloud that was about to disappear into the blue sky. Ours was an indescribable happiness, a true contentment.

We would have gone on lying there, intoxicated by this tranquillity, but we heard heavy footsteps on the flagstones. Fangfang sat up, and I got to my feet to have a look. A man was walking along the stone path from the gate toward the temple. He was a big fellow, with a mass of tangled hair and an untrimmed beard covering his cheeks. He was scowling. From beneath bushy eyebrows, his stern eyes surveyed us.

The wind had turned cool. Probably noticing our curious looks, the man raised his head slightly in the direction of the temple. Then, squinting, he studied the weeds swaying among the shiny tiles. He stopped in front of the incense burner and, striking it with one hand, made it ring. His fingers, gnarled and rough, looked as if they, too, were made of cast iron. In his other hand he held a tattered black cotton bag. He didn't seem like a commune member who had come to tend the vegetables. He was sizing us up again, looking at Fangfang's high-heeled shoes and our travel bags in the

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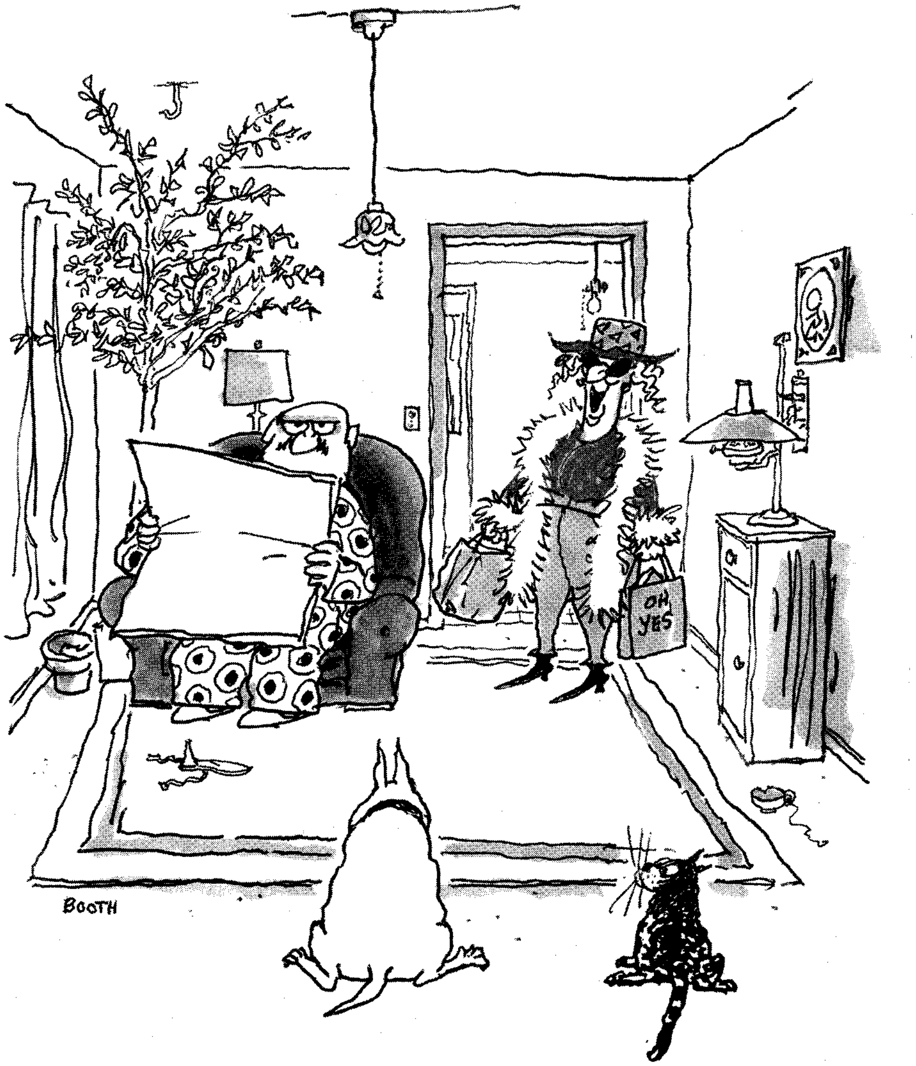

*"I have a taste for luxury."*

grass. Fangfang immediately put her shoes back on. Then, unexpectedly, he addressed us. "Are you from out of town? Are you enjoying yourselves here?"

I nodded.

"It's good weather," he said.

He seemed to want to talk. The eyes under those thick eyebrows had become less stern, and he appeared well-meaning. He was wearing leather shoes with rubber-tire soles, and the seams had split in places. The legs of his trousers were wet, so he had clearly come across the river from town.

"It's cool, and the view is quite beautiful," I said.

"Sit down. I'll be leaving shortly."

It seemed that he was offering a kind of apology. He, too, sat down on the grass beside the flagstones. He opened his bag and said, "Would you like a melon?"

"No, thanks," I said quickly. But he threw me a rock melon anyway. I caught it and was about to throw it back.

"It's nothing. I've got half a bag of them here," he said, raising the heavy bag to show me and taking out another melon as he spoke.

I couldn't say no, so I took a parcel of snacks from my travel bag, opened it, and held it out to him. "Try our snacks," I said.

He took a small piece of cake and put it on top of his bag.

"That's enough," he said. "Go ahead and eat it." He squeezed the melon in his big hands, cracking the brittle skin. "They're clean. I washed them in the river." He tossed away the melon rind and shouted in the direction of the gate, "Take a break! Come and eat some melon!"

"But there are long-horned grasshoppers here!" A boy's voice came from beyond the gate, then the boy himself ap-

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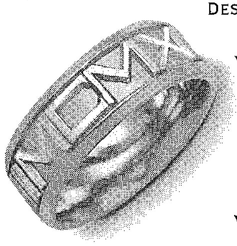
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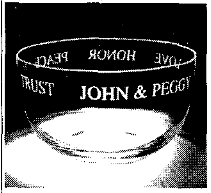
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peared on the slope, holding a wire cage.

"There are plenty of them. I'll catch some for you later," the man replied.

The little boy came toward us, bouncing and jumping as he ran.

"Is it school vacation?" I asked and, copying the man, cracked our melon into pieces.

"It's Sunday today, so I brought him out," he replied.

We were so intoxicated with our own holiday that we had forgotten what day of the week it was. Fangfang took a bite of the melon and smiled at me to indicate that he was a good man. There are, in fact, many good people in the world.

"Eat it. It's from Uncle and Auntie over there," he said to the boy, who was staring at the cream cake on top of his bag. The boy had grown up in this town and had clearly never seen such a cake. He took it and ate it right away.

"Is he your son?" I asked.

The man didn't reply, but said to the boy, "Take the melon and go play. I'll catch grasshoppers for you later."

"I want to catch five of them!" the boy said.

"All right, we'll catch five."

The man watched him as he ran off with the wire cage in his hand. There were deep creases at the corners of his eyes.

"He isn't my son," he said, looking down and taking out a cigarette. Striking a match, he dragged hard. He perceived our surprise and added, "He's the child of my paternal cousin. I want to adopt him, but it depends on whether he's willing to come and stay with me."

Suddenly we understood that this stern man's heart was churning with emotion.

"What about your wife?" Fangfang couldn't help asking.

There was no reply. He puffed hard on his cigarette, got up, and left.

We felt the chill of the mountain air. On the brilliant yellow tiles, the fresh grass that had sprouted in the spring was as tall as the old, withered stalks, and both swayed in the breeze. In the blue sky, a floating cloud that seemed to hang on the corner of a flying eave created the impression that the temple itself was tilting. A broken tile at the edge of the eave looked as if it were about to fall. Perhaps it had sat that way for years without falling.

The man was standing on a mound that had once been a wall, and for a long time he just stared out at the mountains and valleys. In the distance were ridges that were higher and steeper than the hill we were on. There were no terraced fields on the mountain slopes and no houses to be seen.

"You shouldn't have asked him," I said.

"Don't go on about it." Fangfang looked aggrieved.

"There's a grasshopper here!" The boy's voice came from the other side of the hill. It seemed far away but was very clear.

The man strode off in his direction, swinging the bag of rock melons, and disappeared from sight. I put a hand on Fangfang's shoulder and pulled her toward me.

"Don't." She turned away.

"There's a bit of grass in your hair," I explained, removing a pine needle that had stuck to her hair.

"That tile is about to fall," Fangfang said. She, too, had noticed the broken tile that was hanging so precariously. "It would be good if it fell. Otherwise it might injure someone," she mumbled.

"It might be a while before it does fall," I said.

We walked to the mound where the man had been standing. In the valley there was a stretch of farmland, dense crops of luxuriant green barley and broomcorn millet, waiting for the autumn harvest. Below us, on a level part of the slope, were a few mud huts, their bottom halves newly coated in brilliant white lime. The man was holding the boy's hand as they made their way down a little winding track, past the huts and through the crops. Suddenly, like a colt that has broken free of its reins, the boy bolted off, dashing ahead then turning and running back. He seemed to be waving the cage at the man.

"Do you think the man caught grasshoppers for him?"

Fangfang, do you remember asking me that?

"Of course," I said. "Of course."

"He caught five of them!" you said cheekily.

Well, that's the Temple of Perfect Benevolence that we visited on our honeymoon, and which I wanted to describe for all of you. ♦

(*Translated, from the Chinese, by Mabel Lee.*)

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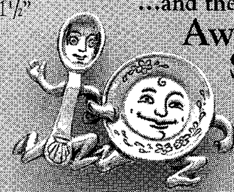

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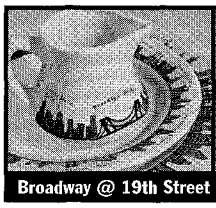

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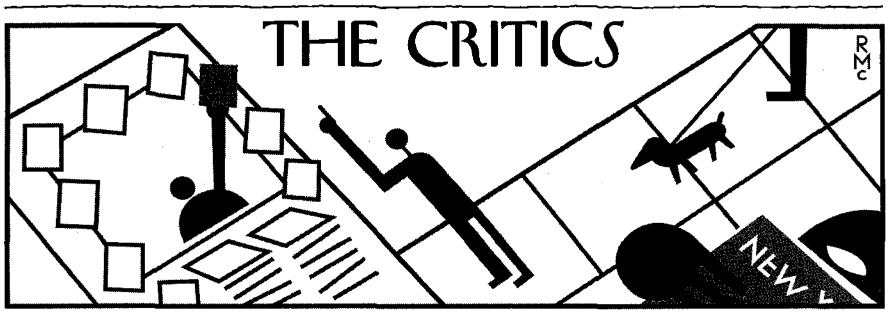


## A CRITIC AT LARGE

# SPARKINGS

*Joseph Cornell and the art of nostalgia.*

### BY ADAM GOPNIK

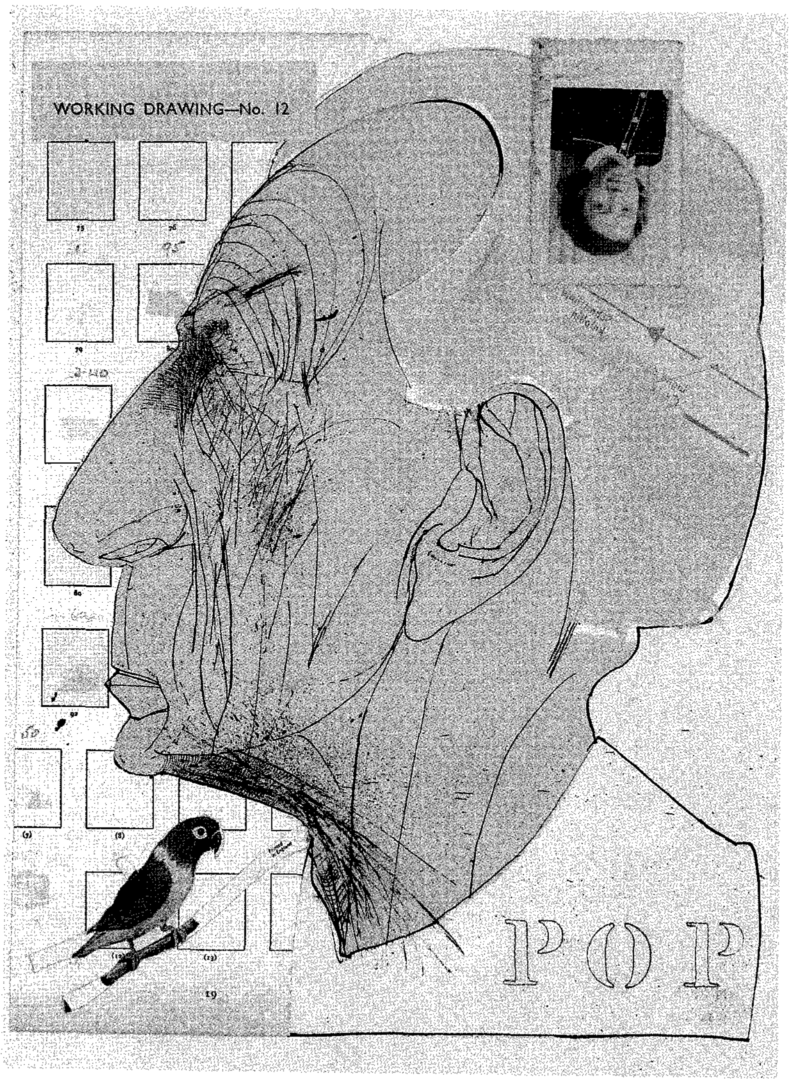
The monosyllables of condescension form at the back of the throat and hover in the staging space just before the lips: "twee," "fey," "camp," even "cute." The art under inspection, after all, has that form technically called mushy stuff in syrup: old French hotel ads and stuffed birds and soap-bubble pipes hermetically sealed behind glass, evoking vanished Victorian worlds of Curiosity Shops and steamer trunks and natural-history-museum displays of long-refuted principles. They ought to have dated; they ought to date; they are, in a way, about being dated. And yet something keeps the visitor locked in place, looking, and turns his mind to the warmer, though still not quite satisfying, words of romantic praise: "haunting," "mysterious," "dreamy," "sublime."

The objects that cause this odd rhythm of stop and look and stop to think again are the shadow boxes that the American artist Joseph Cornell constructed for forty years in the basement of his mother's house on Utopia Parkway, in Queens. This year is the centenary of Cornell's birth, and his boxes continue to hold their own in the American imagination. Since his death, in 1972, it is not so much that Cornell's fame has grown, which is what happens when critics water a reputation, as that his work has become part of the living body of art, which is what happens when artists eat it. It was strange to find how big a part Cornell played in the imaginations of young artists during the nineteen-eighties, when the Abstract Expressionist painters, for so long more central and cosmopolitan, seemed irrelevant, stagy, and stuffy, and when even the autistic genius of Warhol seemed to belong to a Beaux-Arts past, with its faith in painted things stuck on a wall.

Only Pollock, of the artists of the great or big generation, seems today as large as Cornell. The Cornell literature, which can get very literary (a clue, perhaps, to his popularity), continues to grow: he has already been the subject of a fine biography, Deborah Solomon's 1997 "Utopia Parkway," and in the past two years there has been a new, illustrated life, by Diane Waldman, and an elaborately produced collection of literary tributes, edited by the novelist Jonathan Safran Foer and called "A Convergence of Birds." (Last year, there were two gallery shows, one of collages at C & M Arts, and one, extended through this winter, at the Allan Stone Gallery.) Cornell's small art looms so large, in fact, that one is occasionally inclined to take the side of the big boys against the recluse, just as there must still be a Longfellow fan out there who has heard quite enough about Emily Dickinson, thank you. It does look twee, or at least awfully easy. Cornell, like his beloved Saint-Exupéry, gets the mushy-stuff pass that only one or two artists per generation are permitted. Art critics and historians try to solve this problem by searching for the conventional signs of avant-garde reassurance—you see, his boxes are really boxes, you know, primary structures, with, like, appropriated ironies inside—and by making his art into yet another mock-in-the-box. Yet no one has ever really looked at it as anything but desperately sincere. The mushy bits, the parrots and constellations, are, beyond all argument, the potent bits.

It is in the biographies and, particularly, in the diaries and letters that have been published in the past decade that a sense of the man emerges. When you read Cornell while staring at his art, two words eventually come to mind and stick there to help explain what makes the art last, makes it matter: "weird" and "real." For weird he was, weirder than we like to admit. A sweetened Cornell has grown up in our memory: an innocent outsider who made his boxes from his reveries about ballerinas, and whose poetic art exists in a state of "childlike wonder." This is not false, exactly, but it is incomplete. The ballerinas and actresses he worshipped, sometimes from very close up, were often freaked out by the attentions of this shy, gaunt man offering them a box filled with . . . them. (Some of his devotional objects, like the box he made for Lauren Bacall in the forties—smoldering femme fatale surmounted by a predella of dagger-shaped skyscraper turrets—look like props in the last reel of a Hitchcock film.) Cornell's art occupies a special place between the spooky and the sappy, and it is the spookiness that gives the sappiness its power.

But Cornell's art was also *real*, in ways that are easy to miss. Reading his diaries and letters, you are struck by how outward-turning and observant this reclusive dreamer was. Cornell knew more people than Cholly Knickerbocker, from Allegra Kent to Tennessee Williams and Marcel Duchamp—it's hard to name any artist of that generation whose circle was as wide. More important, his life looked like the art he made. He sat in cafeterias drinking coffee and eating pie and staring at girls and going to the movies and reading Mallarmé, and he managed to find funny and affecting coördinates (they were too casual to be called symbols) of these things to put in his boxes. To call Cornell a realist may seem to play with words, but, in the root sense that a realist is an artist preoccupied with the world he finds rather than with the world he wants, Cornell is on the side of the real. He is an artist of longings, but his longings are for things known and seen and hard to keep. He didn't long to go to France; he longed to build memorials to the feeling of wanting to go to France while riding the Third Avenue El. He preferred the ticket to the trip, the postcard to the place, the fragment to the whole. Cornell's boxes look like dreams to us, but the mind that made them was always wide awake.



*In Cornell the flaneur and the recluse were equally intense.*

DAVID HUGHES

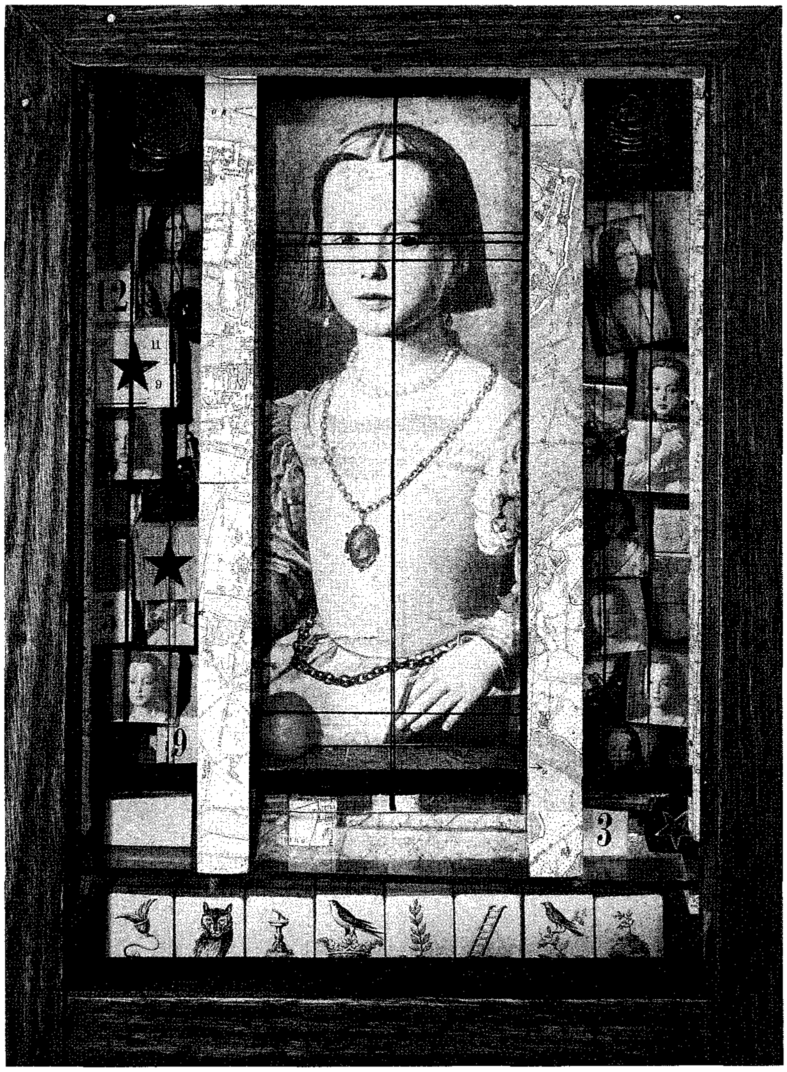
Some American lives roll in mythical shapes—a Presidential aspirant gets born in a place called Hope, and a budding rhapsodic novelist is named after Francis Scott Key—and none more than Cornell's. He was born on Christmas Eve (in 1903), he was employed by a company named Whitman, he spent his life on Utopia Parkway. And Edward Hopper peered over his sister's shoulder, teaching her drawing as the young Cornells grew. He came from an old and distinguished and once rich Yankee family—a background one senses in the long jaw and the attenuated, aristocratic face, skin drawn tight over pointed features—and had, he always insisted, a "happy childhood." It was made from resistant material: his father died of a blood disease when Joseph was only thirteen, and the family was expelled from their big house on the river in Nyack and moved to Queens. Queens was a leafier place then, but the house they bought, and lived in for forty years, was the simplest of single-family frames. The great tragedy of Cornell's life was the plight of his younger brother Robert, who came down with a crippling form of cerebral palsy when he was only one, and whom Cornell took care of for the rest of his life. Robert lived to be fifty-four, as a wraith surrounded by toy-train sets, but his brother treated him as a wonder, not as a burden. ("Beautiful smile from Robert leaving house to go in," he writes. "Stayed with me all afternoon.") Cornell seems to have spent little time in the wilderness of the world before he retreated to Utopia Parkway. A few unhappy years at prep school (Andover, no less), where he was remembered for idolizing Harry Houdini; a job as a salesman for the Whitman textile company. It is said that Robert's condition kept Joseph at home, filling his work with its conspicuous longings for elsewhere. But other men with sick siblings have gone to France, and, if you read through his papers, Joseph seems a self-willed recluse. Frighteningly well read—a list of his favorite books stretches from Donne to Robbe-Grillet—he had a particular affection for Emily Dickinson and Rimbaud, both great rejecters, and wanted to emulate them.

Music was his first love. Mozart, in particular, obsessed him, and at a time when hearing one of the piano concertos was still a bit of an event. He does not seem to have responded to visual art in the usual sense; his firsthand experience of art was mostly secondhand—books and prints and etchings seen on Fourth Avenue. In his diaries and letters, while he is knocked sideways by prints and poems and pies and sexy waitresses and melodies, I can't find a single occasion when he is overwhelmed by a painting, a unique visual thing in place.

As early as 1931, though, he walked into the Julien Levy gallery, on Madison Avenue, and began to look at Magritte and Giacometti and, above all, Max Ernst, whose collages made from nineteenth-century engravings embodied Cornell's own fascination with the secondhand—and were, in any case, of the kind that even an untrained draftsman like him could do. He began making collages and assemblages, first in homage to Ernst, and very quickly in a happier manner, entirely his own.

Surrealism's influence on Cornell is so plain that it is easy to miss how fundamentally at odds he was with the Surrealist enterprise. As he said, memorably and simply, what he wanted in his art was "white magic," where Surrealism's was all black. The earnest Victoriana that looked to Ernst like the rotting leftovers of the great bourgeois feast of the European nineteenth century looked to Cornell like Europe. Cornell wanted to reënchant his objects, to give the things he loved the permanence of art. Though Surrealism supplied, in neatly literary form, a vocabulary and a manner for him, it was not the Surrealists but their predecessors, the Cubists—the last rhapsodic realist movement, the end point of the nineteenth-century search for a language light enough to be modern, large enough to own a city—who eventually won and held his heart. For him, the minor Cubist Juan Gris was, bizarrely, first among modern artists, and it was the larksome Cubist poet Apollinaire, not the dour Surrealist Aragon, whom he placed high among modern poets.

He did some early assemblage and collage, but by the end of the thirties he was fully launched on his boxes: often carefully carpentered from pine, intricately opaque (many have a bottom drawer, kept permanently shut, with a feather or a jack inside), many whitewashed or lacquered fifteen or sixteen times. Where did he get the idea of putting his objects in little boxes under glass? Diane Waldman, in her book on Cornell, suggests that Victorian toys, of a kind one still sees in flea markets, were a precursor; others have mentioned images in Atget's photographs and Victorian shadow boxes, those dainty mantelpiece ornaments. The most important and most obvious influence, though, is surely the dominant visual experience of any city dweller in the past two hundred years: the shopwindow itself. The ordinary objects placed behind glass in juxtapositions meant to inspire desire (the mannequin and the man, the hat and the holly tree)—what was new in Cornell was familiar on the street. Oblique Cornell may be, but no more oblique than a druggist's window. He is at his best when he is working with resistant or very objectlike material, rather than with material already loaded with sentiment. His pharmacies, of the early forties, are probably his first masterpieces, exactly because they look like pharmacies: inventories of small stoppered bottles filled with feathers and balls and liquids. But they also look like a child's idea of science, order imposed on beads and lemonade. They are as clear and as mysterious as a shopwindow you see on the first morning in a strange town.


*The Medici-princess boxes are the most haunting of Cornell's works.*

C. 1948 ©CORNELL FOUNDATION/VAGA, N.Y.

Though Cornell was isolated neither in his work (more people came out to Flushing than visited Max Beerbohm in Rapallo) nor in his art (he had galleries and collectors from early on), he was isolated in another sense, by choice. He had discovered the joys of solitary wandering. Beginning in the early nineteen-forties, his life was structured by a simple rhythm: from Queens via the subway to Manhattan, where he walked and ate and watched and collected, and then back home to the basement and back yard in Queens, where he built his boxes, talked to his mother, and cared for his brother. The flaneur and the recluse were equally intense. Cornell chose to be that classic New York thing: a walker in the city. He was an unambitious walker, though, in that he wanted to see the city, not conquer it. His favorite places took him up and down and all over town: F. A. O. Schwarz and the Bigelow pharmacy and Bickford's and the cast-iron district. Woolworth's was his chapel and Wanamaker's his cathedral. Cornell's appetite and discerning eye for the street around him appears everywhere in the diaries he kept in the forties and fifties, many of which were beautifully annotated and illustrated in Mary Ann Caws's 1993 anthology "Joseph Cornell's Theater of the Mind," a really golden book. He lovingly evokes a time when there was a scarcity economy of culture and a surplus culture of everything else: a time when, though you could eat lunch for fifty cents, Beethoven's Ninth was a sacrament and the Budapest Quartet a revelation and a cappuccino as exotic as a French stripper—a time before Warhol and cheap air travel. The dominant note is of humming happiness, and outward-turning observation. One entry reads:

> Glass of weak iced tea and liverwurst sandwich on the balcony about 4 o' clock overlooking 42 and 3rd Ave. with its typical stream of motley N.Y. humanity this sunny afternoon—right against the window with a ledge where I could open the RILKE in unhurried leisure and enjoy it along with all the minutiae of commonplace spectacle that at times like this takes on so much "festivity"—a real "happiness" here in the sun, although too nervous to do justice to the Rilke text—a real glow in the lines of "the Paris of Gérard de Nerval" . . . the preoccupation with the crowds below formerly a morbid obsession in the infinity of faces and heterogeneity—in particular a black robed nun with a rope or chain conspicuous for lack of usual immaculateness and a real type of uniquely unusual encountered only in a city like N.Y.—as usual a significant kind of happiness is dif-

ficult to get into this "cataloging" but there it was none the less—"this on-the-edgeness" of something apocalyptic, something really satisfying.

People used to say that visiting Cornell at his house was like stepping into one of his boxes, and, reading his diaries, one senses that what fills the boxes is what filled his life, a constant running in and out of the mind of sweets and children and memories and French poems.

He called his best New York moments—when the cafeteria pie and the light in the window and the knowledge of having found the right old print on Fourth Avenue all came together—"sparkings," a "conspiracy of events to produce this miracle of grace." Often, the "sparkings" center on a beautiful young girl he sees briefly on his travels. He called these girls his "*fées*," his *filles*, his faeries. He could come across them even in Flushing: "just now; 'le retour de la fée,' just now the teener—a long moving picture portrait—seen crossing Roosevelt & Main—autumn sunlight—went into Woolworth—wandered all over store daydream shopping without buying—hair (chestnut) worn down back—light blue sweater—high cheek bones—boney frame—emaciated—wan—but real fée." There is something rapt and winsome in his appreciation of his *fées;* and something just a little creepy about his following them into Woolworth's.

He captured them in the reproduction of a Medici princess by Bronzino, whose work he had seen once in one of the few "fine arts" shows that moved him, a catch-all collection of Great Paintings at the 1939 World's Fair. (It was in Flushing, too, and so, perhaps, unintimidating.) The emotional force of the Medici-princess boxes, where the image of Bronzino's grave infanta is repeated over and over, printed in a sad blue twilight or behind a wall of sepia glass, with children's balls and jacks laid out around her as offerings, lies in the ennoblement of the *fées*. But he could fall in love with almost any woman. His infatuations with the great ballerinas of the emerging City Ballet are famous; Allegra Kent, who really was a *fée*, and nearly as original as he was, became a friend. But he had the same feelings about some pretty improbable movie stars. Lauren Bacall and Marilyn Monroe, O.K., but he was also crazy about Sheree North, a now forgotten smoky-voiced soubrette of the fifties, and in 1958 he inserted in a book about French poetry he was reading:

> Write Shirley MacLaine—extra measure & a beautiful tenderness vs. roughneck charm of Dinah Shore who runs the Chevy Show—Shirley MacLaine even in "roughneck" dance routines a kind of joie de vivre & childlike joy that floods the stagnant T-V screen with a flood of cool clear water—*Shirley MacLaine bless her!

The boxes he made for his favorite actresses are, in their way, better Pop art than any Pop art properly so called—more connected to the real spell that popular culture casts on an American mind, which is not detached (an emotion that the Pop artists had to work for) but overly invested, finding more in Shirley MacLaine than Shirley MacLaine can quite supply. (His obsessive infatuations were not quite as "innocent" as is sometimes claimed. His friends recall that he would, with any encouragement, send lurid erotic fantasies to his *fées;* according to Caws, he even sent one a tracing of a string he had put around his penis to show its size.) The unobtainable appealed to Cornell, not because it prevented him from having a real emotional life but because it fed his real emotional life, which was built on longing—commercial, erotic, and romantic.

For Cornell's great subject—announced and taboo—in all his boxes was nostalgia, and his desire was to vindicate it as an emotion. He wanted to make nostalgia into one of the big permanent emotions you could put in a box, like lust or greed, instead of one of the smaller disreputable ones you kept in a drawer. "Nostalgia ok for Wyeth in isolated New England," he complained once. "What is the answer for New York City." The nostalgia he felt, though, was not nostalgia for a particular place or person but a generalized nostalgia for what he called "time passing." Cornell sensed, and in his art dramatized, the difference between two opposed kinds of nostalgia. What's nostalgic in Cornell's art is not that it's made of old things; a lot of the things are so new

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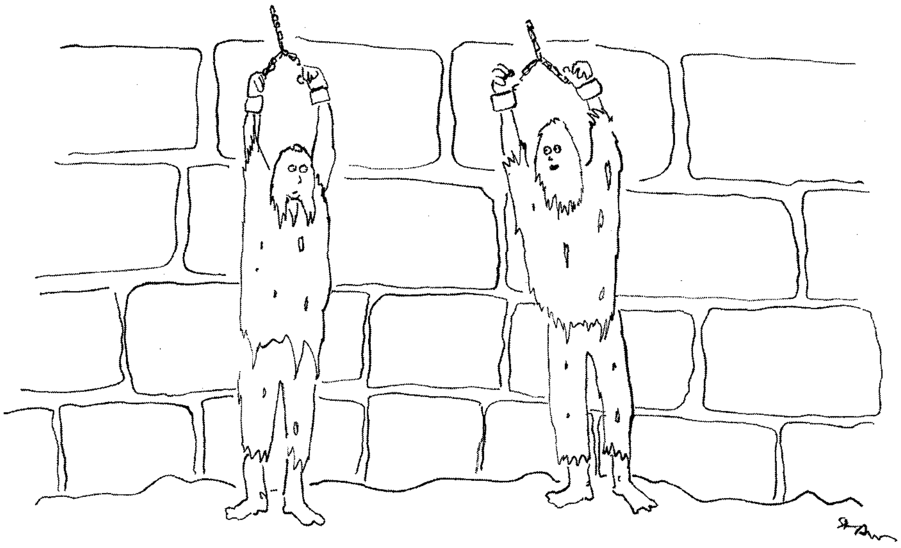


*"T.G.I.F.!"*

• •

that no one would have yet thought of them as potential art—Hollywood stills and penny-arcade chutes. What's nostalgic is that, behind glass, fixed in place, the new things become old even as we look at them: it is the fate of everything, each box proposes, to become part of a vivid and longed-for past, as real and yet as remote from us as the Paris hotel we never got to. There is, he saw, a kind of nostalgia that posits a world that never existed and a set of virtues never put into practice—the kind that idealizes the heroic forties, or the roaring twenties, or the fabulous fifties—and a kind that finds a bottomless melancholy in the simple desolation of life by time. The false kind of nostalgia promotes the superiority of life past; the true kind captures the sadness of life passing.

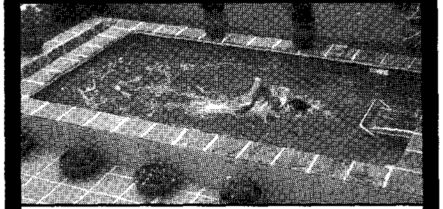
Cornell's last full decade, the sixties, was sad, and not just in retrospect. The rising generation of Pop artists admired him. But, by an irony he could not have envisioned, instead of seeing him as New York's Cubist they gave him exactly the role that the Douanier Rousseau had occupied before the First World War for the Cubists themselves, the "innocent" outsider who had stumbled on a method wiser than he was. In June of 1963, Warhol and Indiana and Rosenquist all came together on an impulse to call on the Old Master, in a kind of cheerful parody of the famous Banquet Rousseau, where Picasso and his friends called on the aging Douanier. But Cornell's longings had no more to do with Pop po-facedness than Rousseau's sobrieties had to do with the Cubists' syncopations. Art historians, who see what they expect to see, usually say that the difference between the use of the repetitive image that Cornell invented—twenty-four princesses in one box—and the way Warhol took it up lies in their touch: Warhol's repetition is said to be affectless and mechanical while Cornell's is romantic. But in fact Warhol's silk-screen method allows for far more variation in feeling than anything that Cornell, a true appropriator, could achieve. (Though conservative art critics have a soft spot for Cornell, he was the first entirely camera-and-object-driven artist to enter the museums. Even Duchamp could draw, and Johns, by comparison, was Poussin.) The real difference between them lies in the orchestration of effects: Cornell's repetitions, enforced by handmade frame and blue glass, are as vulnerable as those of an anxious lover over-stamping a love letter. Warhol's are impervious as a dandy, delighted to be impersonating a stamp machine.

The Medici boxes are the most "haunting" of all Cornell's works, and they haunt us because we are not sure if the princess is imprisoned or on display, or if there is really a difference. The grave and overburdened princess, surrounded by children's blocks and stencilled numbers and pinballs and pinball chutes, is allowed back into the childhood that her position kept her from so many centuries ago. At the same time, the balls and blocks and jacks become accessories of aristocracy; they suddenly have the weary dignity of court art. She is locked up and looking out. What the Medici boxes deny is any kind of conventional warmth, the manic affection for popular objects that enlivened Stuart Davis's crazy lines, or even Gerald Murphy's heraldic razor, and it is this lack of warmth, and its replacement by deeper and more sober emotions, that is new in Cornell. Warhol and Cornell worked from opposite ends of the emotional spectrum, indifference and infatuation, but they both ended in the realm of the Snow Queen. Warhol showed that it is possible to be truly in love with the frozen, Cornell that it is possible to be frozen in true love.

And Cornell's loves made him vulnerable, as vulnerable as any hermit who comes to believe his visions. In a dénouement that belongs in a movie or an opera, in 1962 he finally reached out to one of his *fées*. Her name was Joyce Hunter, and she was an aspiring actress whom he found waiting on tables in a coffee shop on Sixth Avenue. He gave her the *fée* name Tina, made many boxes and collages in her honor, and eventually, tremulously, invited her to live on Utopia Parkway. (They don't seem to have slept together, and he probably died a virgin.) Predictably, she and a boyfriend ended up stealing nine boxes from him. A dealer put the police onto them, and she was arrested in the fall of 1964, which forced Cornell, gallantly but miserably, to spend his time trying to keep her safe from the police and prosecutors. A few months later, she was found murdered in a West Side hotel room, probably for unrelated reasons. Cornell was heartbroken. Like Swann or Seymour Glass, he mistook emptiness for innocence, and paid for it. Then, in 1965, Robert died—"at 1:30 in the afternoon my blessed brother looked at his wall of celestial toy trains, out on the saffron feeding grounds of the ring-necked pheasants, glanced back and without a sigh was released from his frail frame"—and Joseph was alone. A friend who visited found the once warm house unbearably cold. Cornell said that he couldn't endure the sound of the furnace going on and off in the basement below.

Since his own death, Cornell has suffered from being too narrowly placed within the apostolic succession of American avant-garde art, which makes him look more of an outsider than he was. Anyone reading the New York poets, Hart Crane and Frank O' Hara—or, for that matter, Wallace Stevens and Elizabeth Bishop—would expect a companion visual art that looked exactly like this, rather than like the vast exclusions of Ad Reinhardt or Barnett Newman. The balance of the metaphysical and the quotidian, the intimate address and the popular symbols, the private mythologizing of mass culture, the singing New York street and the oblique references, a dream of France dotting the work like raisins in a pudding—all these things are far closer to American modernist poetry than to its art. To call Cornell a poetic artist is in this sense just a flat taxonomic fact.

And it is not meant entirely in his praise. The best of his contemporaries were not content with an art that worked like poetry, with its natural bent for a mixed rhetoric, for a little of this and a little of that. The visual arts, for good or ill, tend toward the absolute, the "iconic"—the blue of Chartres would be no better for a little yellow—and the absolutism of the high American modernists is what connects them to the monumental tradition. Cornell's art was smaller, and more particular. In a curious way, what we miss most about his work is its embrace of the city; we miss the city that was there to embrace. (It would not be the least irony of an art of purposeful nostalgia that we end up being nostalgic for it.) For all its sadness, there is still in Cornell's work the hum of a secure and many-chambered civilization, one that was roomy enough for Gérard De Nerval, so to speak, to dine on Boston cream pie, roomy enough for Cornell. It is hard not to long for Cornell's longings, imagining him, in a city now largely vanished, collecting his prints and magazines and poems and wandering in somewhere to eat his doughnuts and noting the exact look on the face of a *fée* waitress and knowing all the while that, if he could just get back on the El to Flushing by five-thirty, he was home free. ♦



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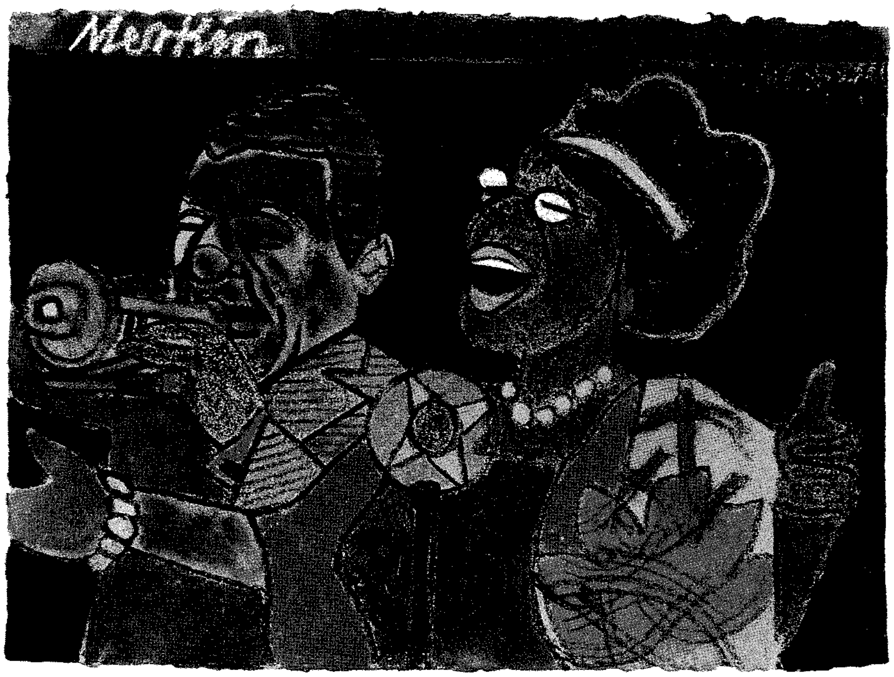
# RHYTHM AND BLUES

*"Ma Rainey" and August Wilson's mighty music.*

BY JOHN LAHR

Toward the end of August Wilson's exquisite play "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" (revived at the Royale, under the deft direction of Marion McClinton), the eponymous Delta blues singer, whose low throaty contralto broadcasts her impudence and her independence, turns to her session musicians and opines about the blues (which the real Rainey claimed to have christened in 1902 on a tent-show junket). "White folks don't understand about the blues," she says. "They hear it come out, but they don't know how it got there. They don't understand that's life's way of talking. You don't sing to feel better. You sing 'cause that's a way of understanding life." The blues are catastrophe expressed lyrically. In their bathos and braggadocio, they repeat and repair what Zora Neale Hurston called "the muteness of slavery." The music allows African-Americans, Wilson says, "to reconnect, to reassemble and gird up for the next battle." His play is itself a blues song, and it does, onstage, what Rainey says her songs do: it understands life; it takes an empty world and fills it up with something.

"I have been amazed by the Anglo-Saxon's lack of curiosity about the internal lives and emotions of the Negroes," Hurston wrote in 1950. Wilson shows that this lack of curiosity—a sort of chronic amnesia—extends to African-Americans as well. "Blacks in America want to forget slavery—the stigma, the shame," he told the *Times* in 1987. "That's the wrong move. If you can't be who you are, who can you be?" In his plays, Wilson aims to give back to African-Americans the experience of themselves, which has been lost in their hard scrabble to survive; his gift is to capture the African-American idiom, not just the dialect. Here, by the time his title character comes onstage, Wilson has already spent forty-five minutes bearing witness to the black community, to the extraordinary within its ordinary. "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," which is set in 1927, at a white-owned record company, has none of the quaintness of the usual dramatic depictions of black life; instead, it puts African-American behavior into both a socio-economic and a spiritual context. On David Gallo's cunning set, the white bosses sit, encased and unreachable, in a glass-panelled control room above the stage. Below, in the crepuscular gloom of a dilapidated office—made all the more claustrophobic by the towering brown brick tenements that frame the stage—the musicians banter and kid each other as they wait for their meal ticket to arrive. When they play, the trombonist Cutler repeatedly counts them in with the phrase "One . . . Two . . . You know what to do." But, other than playing their instruments, the musicians *don't* know what to do; they are flummoxed by their own impotence and ignorance. Only one of them, an ambitious trumpeter named Levee (the powerhouse Charles Dutton), can even read or write music. "I got talent!" crows Levee, who likes to improvise and disdains the "old jug-band music" he's forced to play. As Dutton portrays him, Levee is revved up to the new urban rhythms; he lives by the momentum he imagines. He has lost his faith ("God can kiss my ass!"), and, through his denial of his origins ("You don't see me running around in no jungle with no bone between my nose"), he has also lost his ancestors. Levee enters the stage in a city slicker's pin-striped suit and a new pair of two-tone shoes, which announce his unabashed sense of possibility. "Nigger got them clodhoppers," he says, pointing at another musician's shoes. "He ain't nothing but a sharecropper." Levee has big plans: the dyspeptic record-company boss Sturdyvant (Louis Zorich) has offered to buy his songs, and the company's manager, Mr. Irvin (Jack Davidson), has told him that they'll be recording his arrangement of one of Ma Rainey's numbers; Levee wants to form his own band, and he sees music as more than just shucking for a payday. "I'm talking about art!" he says to the bass player Slow Drag (the excellent Stephen McKinley Henderson). "What's drawing got to do with it?" Slow Drag replies.



*Charles Dutton and Whoopi Goldberg perform in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom."*

RICHARD MERKIN

In this vivid piece of storytelling, each character has his own special stymied music. Toledo (the outstanding Thomas Jefferson Byrd), a wiry, ascetic pianist, is the only book reader among the musicians, and he tries to use his learning to take some of the hot air out of Levee's balloon. (Byrd's angular solitude—he's the spitting image of Jelly Roll Morton—plays terrifically against Dutton's roly-poly rambunctiousness.) Toledo has historical perspective; he is continually mirroring back to the group the ignorance that emasculates them. At the root of the African-American dilemma of identity, he argues, is historical and economic caprice. "We done sold Africa for the price of tomatoes," he says. "We done sold ourselves to the white man in order to be like him." He explains, "The white man knows you just a leftover. 'Cause he the one who done the eating and he know what he done ate. But we don't know that we been took and made history out of. Done went and filled the white man's belly and now he's full and tired and wants you to get out the way."

Still, Ma Rainey—played here by that doyenne of defiance Whoopi Goldberg—is not "spooked up with the white men." "What you all say don't count with me," she tells the producers. "You understand? Ma listens to her heart. Ma listens to the voice inside her." The real Ma Rainey, who is often referred to as "the mother of the blues," always used quotation marks around her first name in print and on record labels. For his stage appropriation of her life, Wilson has removed the punctuation, and also the implied irony. To the white world, which packaged Rainey's sound on cheap, poorly mastered records, the "Ma" was hyperbolic. ("I'm not putting up with any Royal Highness . . . Queen of the Blues bullshit," Sturdyvant says, at the beginning of the play.) To the black world, Rainey's outspoken popular music—with its combination of cynicism, sorrow, and sass—offered warmth as well as redress; it made her both a mother and a kind of priestess, "a celebrant," as Ralph Ellison called Rainey's protegée and competitor Bessie Smith, "who affirmed the values of the group and man's ability to deal with chaos."

In Wilson's story, the economic power of Rainey's voice allows her to be herself, to make the white world dance to her tune. "If you colored and can make them some money, then you all right with them," she says. "Otherwise, you just a dog in the alley." When Ma Rainey enters the studio, she enters with demands. She wants her car to be fixed, her stuttering nephew to sing on the record, her tempos to be kept, Coca-Colas to be supplied during her sessions. The white management hops to it. Draped in brocaded red velvet, Goldberg plays Rainey with the sure swagger of a woman who isn't giving up anything but bubble gum and hard times. Rainey takes up a lot of oxygen; her performance of self is as much an act of psychological revenge as it is a show of power.

But while she controls her fate in the white world, Rainey is not sufficiently enlightened to encourage other African-Americans to control theirs. She fires Levee for challenging her musical authority, and he is promptly discarded by the record-company boss, too, as cavalierly as Toledo had predicted ("He done ate your black ass"). Annihilated by the white world, Levee in turn annihilates the black world, for having called his ambition into question. When Toledo accidentally steps on Levee's new shoes—those totems of mobility and promise—Levee stabs him in the back, only then to be haunted by Toledo's vision. "Don't look at me like that! Toledo!" he says, furious at the limp body in his lap. "Nigger, don't look at me like that! I'm warning you, nigger." But the warning that lingers is Toledo's: "As long as the colored man look to white folks for approval . . . then he ain't never gonna find out who he is and what he's about."

Though it may have a couple of set pieces too many, "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom"—only the second African-American drama in the twentieth century to be a hit on Broadway—is still as resonant and compelling today as it was when it first opened, in 1984. "To grasp the penetration of Western civilization in a minority, it is necessary to know how the average behaves and lives," Hurston argued. Wilson's œuvre answers the challenge and achieves one more complex thing: his plays bring blacks and whites together under the same roof to share in the profound mysteries of race and class and the bittersweet awareness of how separate and indivisible we really are. ♦

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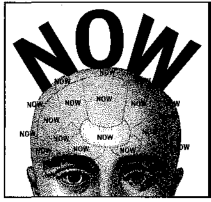

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# ANGELS AND INSTINCTS

*A Julia Margaret Cameron retrospective.*

BY JUDITH THURMAN

There used to be an exit off the expressway to Boston's Logan Airport marked "Mystic River Bridge." I passed the sign a thousand times when I was a student, and always wondered what made the river mystic. I assumed that it had something to do with Puritan theology—a passage to the afterlife. Not at all. According to historians, the explorers who first mapped the region either corrupted the Indian word for "great tidal stream"—Missi-tuk—or, and I prefer this explanation, they gave the river its name because they never were able to locate its source. A biographer cutting tracks through the backcountry of an artist's life in pursuit of its enigmas also discovers that there are rivers without a source. A protean talent is one of them. A capacity for happiness is another. In that sense, there is something doubly "mystic" about the career of Julia Margaret Cameron. She took up photography in 1864, at the age of forty-eight, having raised eleven children—five of her own, five orphaned relations, and a ravishing Irish beggar maid whom she employed as a model and married off in fairy-tale fashion to a gentleman. She taught herself to use a twelve-by-ten-inch sliding box camera and the volatile chemicals necessary to develop her own pictures. In a prolific career that lasted little more than a decade—while she was caring for an invalid husband and running a household on the Isle of Wight that was, in essence, a resort hotel for the Victorian intelligentsia—Cameron pioneered the closeup, experimented with soft focus, manipulated her negatives to produce painterly effects, and confirmed the legitimacy of the photographic portrait as a work of art. Although she never earned a living from her pictures (and didn't have to), she sold them widely and promoted herself with an entrepreneurial flair for hype. Her "aspirations," she told a friend, were nothing less than "to ennoble Photography." In retrospect, her immodesty strikes one as both just and endearing. Her subjects, however, like her children, servants, critics, and dealers, were often cowed by her. On one of her many studies of Tennyson she inscribed a boast that would make a nice epitaph: "A column of grandeur—done by my will against his will."

A common trait of great talent in whatever sphere seems to be an exceptional tolerance for, or perhaps blindness to, self-contradiction. Cameron's work embodies the paradoxes of a nature that was tyrannical and benevolent, gushing and steely, flamboyantly eccentric and devoutly Christian. Her best portraits seem to challenge the Victorian pieties that her lesser work exalts. One might almost call her a closet feminist, except that she excluded women fairly systematically from her album of geniuses (Carlyle, Darwin, Herschel, Browning, Arnold, Trollope, and Longfellow, among others) and saw little interest in the face of any female older than eighteen. There was room in her pride for only one lioness: Julia Margaret Cameron.

The virtue of the lady was the collateral that secured the artist's freedom. Cameron's shooting ratio was about ten misty-eyed Madonnas to every Sappho, Hypatia, or Beatrice Cenci, but somehow the potent erotic undercurrent in her work was never perceived as an affront to respectability, and it still isn't. Blameless, dumpy Mrs. Cameron was as promiscuous, in her way, as a rake—flitting from one to another great man or pretty girl whom she just had to have. She staged love scenes between child models and posed them nude, then gave the photographs titles like "An Angel unwinged by your desire." Yet, as far as I know, she has not been accused, as has her friend and contemporary Lewis Carroll (with whom she shared Alice Liddell), of latent pedophilia. Cameron managed the remarkable feat of accomplishing everything that convention ex-

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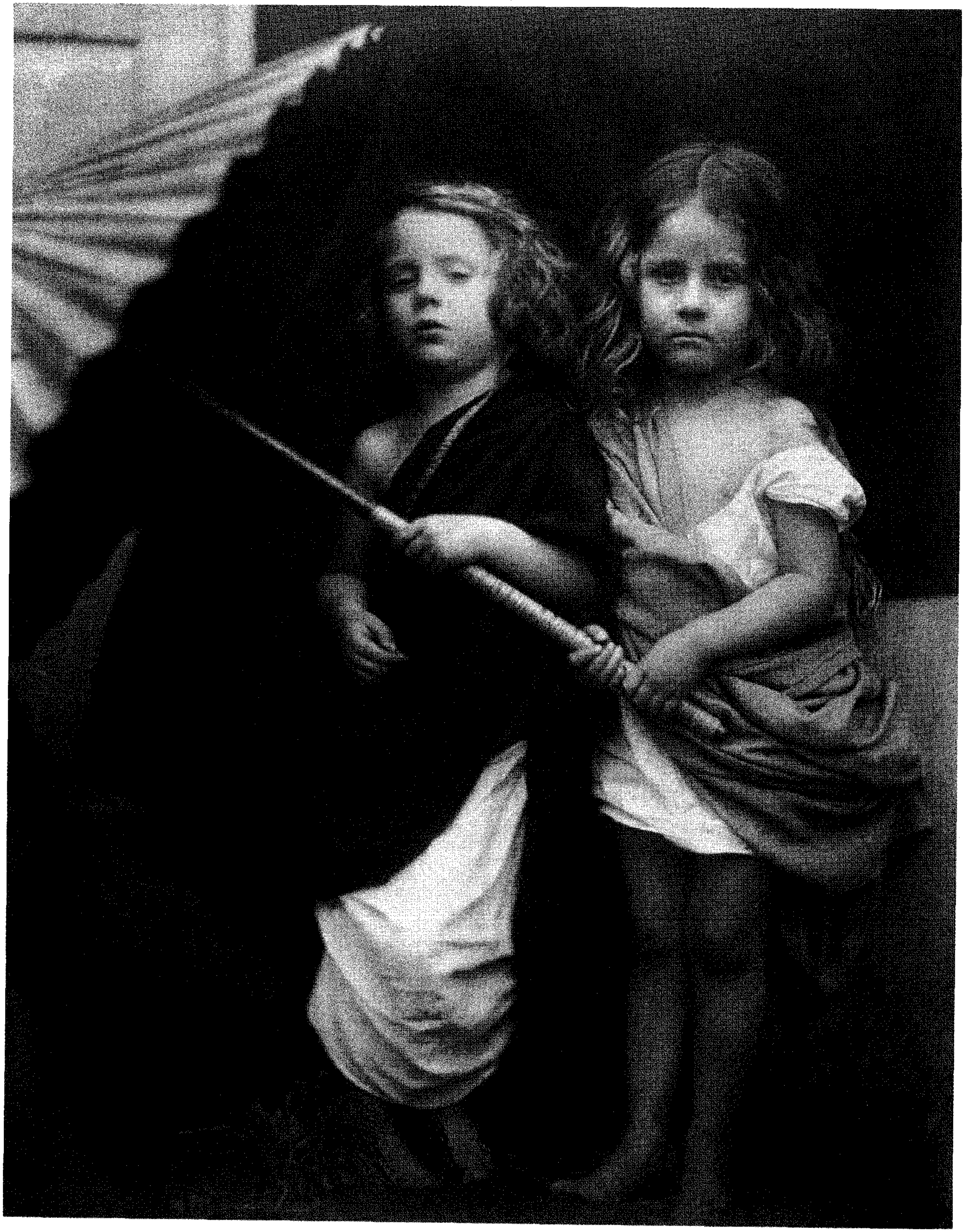

*Early in 1864, a few weeks after she was given her first camera as a Christmas present, Julia Margaret Cameron, who was then forty-eight years old, made the moody and ambiguous portrait of "Paul and Virginia," based on an eighteenth-century novel.*

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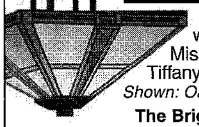

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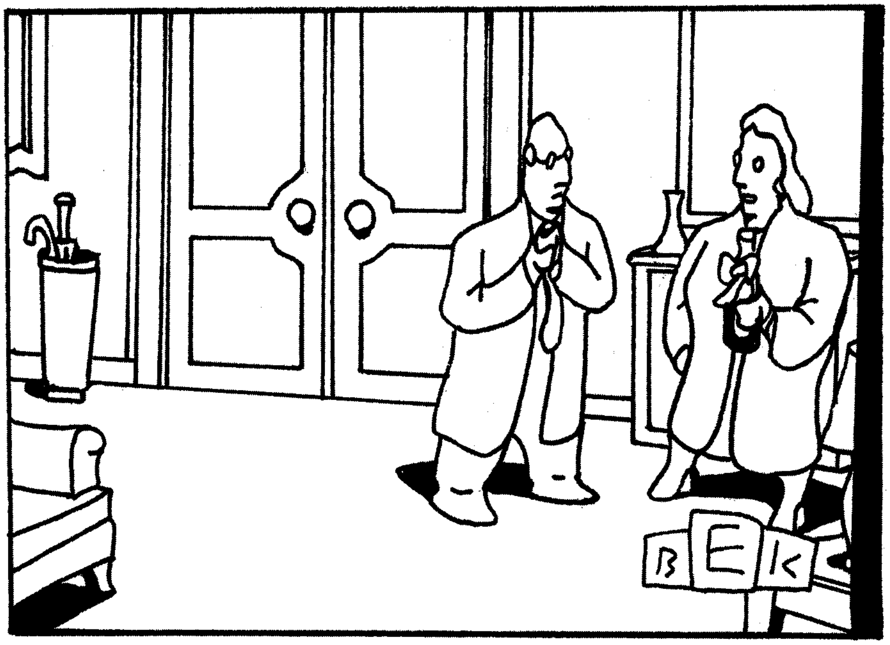
pected of her as a mother and a matron without sacrificing any of the originality that she demanded of herself. And if one can believe the evidence—a big if, since the study of photography, like the practice of writing lives, instills in one a healthy skepticism toward the notion of objective truth—she was that rarest of creatures: a sovereign artist happy with her lot as a little woman.

Cameron is "rediscovered" periodically, even though she is probably the most widely studied of photography's old masters, and her work never sinks from the radar screen of major collectors and institutions. The Art Institute of Chicago mounted a major show, "Julia Margaret Cameron's Women," a little over four years ago. A comprehensive exhibition of more than a hundred prints opened early this month at the National Portrait Gallery in London, and moves to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in the fall. Two publications accompany the show: "Julia Margaret Cameron: A Critical Biography," by Colin Ford (Getty Museum; $50), and a catalogue raisonné, "Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs," edited by Ford and Julian Cox (Getty Museum; $150). Ford's biography is a handsomely designed, oversized illustrated volume that is much more compelling to look at than it is to read. The text is informative on social and art history, but, in certain respects, Ford's view of Cameron here, as in his catalogue essay, resembles those crisply focussed Victorian studio portraits that she imperiously disdained as hackwork because they favored the details of their subjects' dress, posture, accoutrements, and class at the expense, she thought, of their soul. Ford isn't a psychologist, and he doesn't, as he writes of a Victorian memoirist, have "a way with words." But the six-hundred-page catalogue raisonné he co-edited with Cox is a sumptuously presented monument of scholarship. (It's heartening to see the Getty millions spent so well.) Cox, for his part, takes the measure of Cameron's methods and achievements with erudite finesse.

Julia Margaret Pattle was born in 1815 into a well-off Anglo-Indian family living in Calcutta, which was then the subcontinent's capital city. The Pattles moved in the upper echelons of colonial society, although the resemblance of their name to the common native patronym Patel inspired a certain amount of unkind genealogical snickering. For nearly a century, the men had worked for the East India Company or the Bengal Civil Service, which Cameron's father, James, entered at fourteen. According to a family tale as colorful as it is dubious, the dead body of James Pattle, "a notorious liar and drinker," was shipped home to England in a cask of rum. The cask exploded violently during a storm



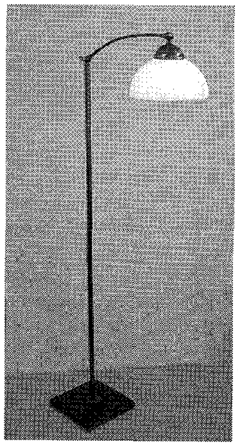
*"It will be nice to get out, have a few bitter generalizations, and come home."*

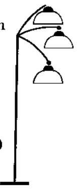
at sea, so terrifying the widow that she expired, raving mad, leaving the sailors to finish off the tasty embalming fluid. "This Pattle story," writes Hermione Lee, Virginia Woolf's biographer, who tells it with relish, "was always popping up." Woolf's mother, a muse of the Pre-Raphaelites, was the austerely beautiful Julia Stephen, née Jackson—Cameron's niece, namesake, godchild, and favorite model. Cameron's fascination with her bordered upon obsession, and Julia posed for more studies—nearly fifty, including one that the artist called "My Favorite Picture of all my works"—than anyone else whom Cameron photographed. The favorite, with the maiden's downcast eyes averted from the lens, is considerably more sentimental than the dramatic frontal views in which the subject stares back at the photographer assertively, as if to say, "I am, like you, my own woman." If a portrait is a contest, it is also a collaboration, intimate though unequal, and an overbearing artist like Cameron probably achieves the best results with a sitter who exerts some inner resistance. (It was often small children, annoyed by their silly angel wings, who did so.) The great pictures of Julia Jackson treat her face like a telescopic closeup of the moon, half flooded by light, half scoured by shadow, lending it the mystery of a celestial body seen through a long lens. The closer Cameron brings those luminous human features, the more she magnifies one's sense of their goddesslike autonomy and remoteness.

Cameron's photographs decorated the Stephens' house in Kensington and, later, the Woolfs' Bloomsbury drawing room. It was Lady Stephen who wrote the biographical sketch of her aunt for the Dictionary of National Biography, edited by her husband, Sir Leslie. (Among four hundred and twenty entries, Cameron was one of eighteen women, and the only photographer, so honored.) The Woolfs' Hogarth Press published a selection of Cameron's portraits, "Victorian Photographs of Famous Men & Fair Women," with a fond profile by Woolf and an essay by Roger Fry, who concluded that the pictures would "outlive most of the works of the artists who were her contemporaries."

One of those contemporaries, Thackeray, coined the expression "Pattledom" to describe the deliciously exotic family culture that bred Cameron and her six sisters. According to Woolf, they were all great beauties, except for squat, clever, emphatic Julia Margaret—a fact that shouldn't be underestimated in view of her lifelong fixation on nubile grace and the absence, amounting to a horror, of homeliness from her portraiture of women. Their mother, née Adéline de l'Étang, was a minor French aristocrat with a racy ancien-régime pedigree and a noble Indian ancestress whose dark complexion and "Pondicherry eyes" were passed down through the generations. Among themselves, the girls preferred to speak Hindustani, and even when they spoke English they gesticulated with a distinctly foreign animation that would surely have been considered alarmingly woggish. Julia left India at the age of three and spent much of her childhood with her maternal grandmother in Paris and Versailles. One would like to know more about those early years, in part because the eroticism of Cameron's work and the glamour that a carnal, even predatory, appetite imparts to it are, I suspect, a product of them.

As the art critic Carol Mavor has observed, Cameron's pictures look as though "they have been touched all over," and, literally, they were. For her, Julian Cox writes, "the collodion and varnish were elemental skins that were susceptible to, and invited, touch. Once committed, the hair, oils, dirt, and fingertip smudges were eternally suspended in the plates' cutaneous layers. Cameron considered these blobs and 'flaws' . . . artifacts of the experience." The sexual charge one feels in otherwise chaste portraits comes, I think, from her conflicting impulses to worship and to despoil. She made her virgins, unthinkably for the period, let down their hair, and she tousled the heads of her little angels to get rid of their "nursery primness," as one of them recalled; in the same way, she roughed up her old heroes and poetic swains. Children embrace, often suggestively. In an allegorical study entitled "Spring," a moody toddler hikes up a corner of her crumpled shift to expose the almondine sliver of her labia. Lust, Cameron told her son Hardinge, was not to be despised, for the "animal side" of human nature was "the rich soil that bears the golden fruit but if good seed is not sown in that soil it then degenerates into a dung heap does it not?" Here





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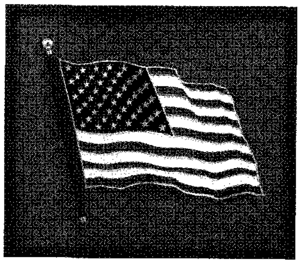

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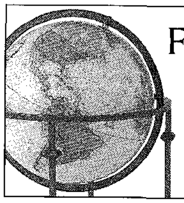

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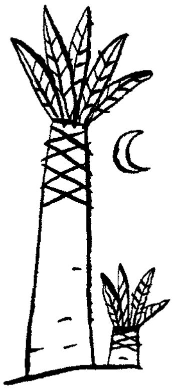
one can see that not even her syntax is properly English. Cameron's work thrums with a seductive accent, and there is an untidy seam in the excitable prose of her letters where some more corporeal language has been taken in. Although she spoke Victorian fluently, it wasn't her mother tongue. True daughters of Britannia like the Brontës, George Eliot—even Woolf—were raised to believe that their greatest worldly leverage, their route to influence in art, politics, or any public arena, resided in abstention. Despite misogynistic traditions, French culture, like Indian culture, has always prized woman's desire.



Julia Margaret was twelve years old and still living in France when, in 1826, Nicéphore Niépce, an inventor who had already patented a combustion engine, succeeded in arresting the image projected by a camera obscura on a pewter plate coated with bitumen varnish. The exposure took eight hours. Louis Daguerre, who painted scenic backdrops for the theatre using a camera obscura, was also trying to develop a photographic process, and the two men became partners. When Niépce died suddenly, in 1833, Daguerre continued to refine the precision of his equipment and greatly reduced the exposure time by steaming the plates with fumes of mercury. On January 7, 1839, his process was introduced with the fanfare its significance deserved to the French Academy of Sciences: the age of mechanical reproduction had begun.

An English scientist named William Henry Fox Talbot had, in the meantime, invented a method for taking photographs using paper instead of a metal plate, and generating a reproducible negative—a Talbotype—rather than an irreproducible, direct positive like the daguerreotype. He now hastened to publish his experiments, and three weeks after the announcement of Daguerre's success Michael Faraday described Fox Talbot's "light drawings" to the fellows of the Royal Institution in London. The revolutionary nature of both discoveries was immediately obvious, though they couldn't be exploited for portraiture until the exposure time was again radically reduced (Cameron's studies took between two and nine minutes, depending on the hour of the day and the brightness of the sun) and a remedy was found for a problem that became apparent when the first daguerreotypes were only a few months old—they faded to invisibility.

The third great pioneer of photographic technology, Sir John Herschel, was an astronomer, and thus a connoisseur of light. It was he who coined the words "photography," "snapshot," and "negative," and who solved, as he put it, "Daguerre's problem." Having concocted his own photographic base, with carbonate of silver, he took a picture of his father's forty-foot telescope at Slough (Herschel *père* discovered Uranus), and froze the development of the image by washing the negative with a solvent that he had invented twenty years before—hyposulphite of soda—which became known in the trade as the preservative hypo. Something miraculous (all miracles defy death) was suddenly possible: forever to fix an ephemeral moment.

In 1839, Herschel sent an account of his discoveries and of Daguerre's and Fox Talbot's to his young friend Mrs. Cameron, who was then twenty-four and living in Calcutta. They had met three years earlier, in Cape Town, where he had built an observatory. The Cape was a popular spa for English colonials escaping the fevers of India, and Julia Margaret, still Miss Pattle, was convalescing there. So was her future husband, Charles Hay Cameron, a colonial civil servant and liberal jurist twenty years her senior. The couple married in 1838, and it's worth noting that her romance with photography re-created the scenario of her infatuation with Charles: its leading celebrants are an august patriarch and a well-born virgin.

Though twenty-five years passed before Cameron took up a camera—one of the longest exposures in history—the interval was by no means blank. Charles Hay Cameron had collaborated with Thomas Babington Macaulay on reforming the Indian Penal Code, and in 1843 he inherited Macaulay's seat on the ruling Supreme Council. A year later, when the new governor-general arrived without his wife, Mrs. Cameron became the presiding hostess at Government House. The Camerons had been buying coffee plantations in Ceylon, intending to live off the income these generated when Charles retired. He did so prematurely in 1848, apparently for reasons of health, although Ford suggests that his views on Britain's duty to provide a "proper education for all Indians" and to integrate them into the civil service hadn't endeared him to either the East India Company or the Colonial Office. The Camerons abruptly moved back to England. She was thirty-three.

Thackeray's daughter, Anne Ritchie, recalled meeting Mrs. Cameron at her house in East Sheen, south of the Thames, soon after her return from India: "I remember a strange apparition in a flowing red velvet dress, although it was summer time. . . . When we left she came with us bareheaded, with trailing draperies, part of the way to the station as her kind habit was. A friend of mine told me how on one occasion she accompanied him the same way carrying a cup of tea which she stirred as she walked along." About this time, one of the artist celebrities whom Fry so rightly predicted Cameron would come to outshine, George Frederic Watts, painted a very different portrait of her. It is a study of a wan young woman in a white shirtwaist, with delicate features, a high forehead, dark hair simply parted, prominent cheekbones, and faraway eyes devoid of fire. In another picture—a photograph with two of her sons—she is gussied up in a taffeta gown, and plumpness has filled in her hollows. Around 1858, she posed for an unknown photographer staring fatuously at her watch, as if she had a soft-boiled egg on the stove. Ten years later, she leaned glumly against a high-backed chair, looking like a spinster with a case of indigestion after a big lunch. There is only one image of her returning the camera's gaze, and she does so warily—almost with hostility. No one ever wore down Cameron's resistance to capture a glimpse, in the woman, of the ardor that radiates from the work.

When she was middle-aged (in her early forties—she died at sixty-three), Cameron cut a figure of "courtly charm," as Tennyson's wife, Emily, put it tactfully, which is to say she was a somewhat affected, voluble, self-conscious eccentric given to hyperbole. "Mrs. Cameron alternates between the seventh heaven and the bottomless pit," a friend wrote. "She lives upon superlatives." The flowing robes that Ritchie describes ("uniting Paris art and the draperies of Raphael") anticipated the rage for "Artistic Dress" that reached its height in the eighteen-eighties. They gave her a sibylline, vaguely Eastern air, and although they hid more of the body than a corseted gown with conventional crinolines, they were considered bohemian. Cameron was extremely conscious of fashion, even though she projected a sublime disregard for it, shrouding her models from the neck down in black velvet or the folds of a shawl. It was an inspired survival strategy, because dress is the perishable flesh in a photograph, emotion its bones, and her greatest portraits have thus been preserved from the rot of quaintness.

The same cannot, on the whole, be said of the hammy tableaux vivants that she called "My Fancy Subjects"—groups of figures illustrating scenes from myth, Shakespeare, Renaissance painting, the Bible, and Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." Critics have been nearly unanimous in finding these pictorial narratives, which might be the stills from an early silent film or an old-fashioned Vassar senior play, "ludicrous" and "amateurish," and Ford doesn't persuade me that they deserve a reëvaluation. One can too easily imagine bossy Cameron fiddling ungently with the costumes and props she has rustled up from a steamer trunk and barking brusque orders at the hapless house guests drafted to serve High Art when they would much rather be having high tea. Her husband, Charles, "with his craggy face and trailing white hair and beard, made an ideal model for the aged Merlin," writes Sylvia Wolf, who curated the 1998 show of Cameron's women, "but his tendency to laugh throughout the sessions ruined a number of negatives."

Cameron's family circle was a photogenic trout pond of pulchritude and distinction, and when she needed a May Queen, a foolish virgin, or a hirsute sage all she had to do was fish one from her stock. The Camerons' neighbor Sir Henry Taylor, a once eminent writer now forgotten, posed for her both as himself, looking like one of Rembrandt's burghers, and as Prospero and Friar Lawrence. The Taylors introduced the

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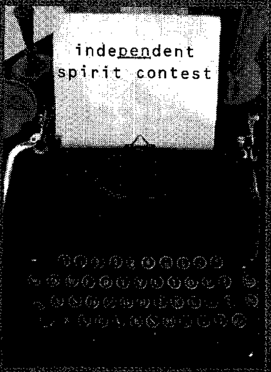

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Camerons to Tennyson and his wife, who became their closest friends. Cameron's glamorous sister Sara Prinsep also lived nearby, at Little Holland House in Kensington, where she presided over a salon of Pre-Raphaelite painters, poets, and aristocrats with artistic pretensions. It was here that the teen-aged Ellen Terry was "rescued" from her abominable family profession—acting—by the Prinseps' artist-in-residence, George Watts, who married her when she was sixteen and he forty-seven. She un-rescued herself after a miserable year of child-bridehood to fulfill her destiny on the stage. In Cameron's startlingly modern portrait of Terry—dewy of cheek, scantily dressed in the kind of deluxe peasant blouse one can find at Saint Laurent, and toying with a strand of beads—she looks just like what she was: a melancholy Lolita.

Charles Cameron and his two elder sons left England for Ceylon in 1859 to survey their estates. Julia Margaret paid an extended visit that year to the Tennysons, who were living in the seaside village of Freshwater on the Isle of Wight, and she was so enchanted with the neighborhood's supply of rustic charm and urbane company that, "impulsive as ever," Ford writes, she bought two substantial cottages and an adjacent property that she called Dimbola, after one of her coffee plantations. The Poet Laureate had decamped from London in part to escape importunate fans, but he succeeded only in helping to transform the island into what Phyllis Rose, in an essay for Sylvia Wolf's catalogue, impishly calls a Victorian Martha's Vineyard. Cameron took it upon herself to succor the big-name pilgrims. A contemporary Irish visitor compared the community to "a French salon. . . . We had our Chateaubriand in Tennyson and . . . our Madame Récamier in [her]." Despite the fact that she was constantly occupied with entertaining her illustrious company at what she described as "feasts of intellect" (dinners at Dimbola lasted for four hours, and guests were expected to sing, play, recite poetry, or, at the very least, pontificate), she managed to feel bored. When, in 1863, her husband embarked on another long trip to the colonies, her daughter and son-in-law Julia and Charles Norman gave her a camera for Christmas with the wish that "it may amuse you Mother to try to Photograph during your solitude." And so her career began.

Colin Ford argues plausibly that Cameron's first camera had to be a gift that she was already at least partially competent to use. She set up a laboratory right after the New Year, and it took only four weeks of fumbling to make her first satisfactory print, the portrait of a nine-year-old girl named Annie Philpot. "I was in a transport of delight," she wrote in an autobiographical sketch, "Annals of My Glass House." In the month that followed, she produced what Cox calls a "torrent of magnificent pictures"—more than three dozen, a remarkable number considering the labor that each one required. She was working with fragile, twelve-by-ten-inch glass plates. First, she washed and polished them; their fastidious cleanliness was essential. Next, she treated them with a freshly mixed collodion emulsion. Its distribution had to be perfectly even. The plates were bathed in light-sensitive silver nitrate, exposed while still wet, rushed to a darkroom and developed with a solution of pyrogallic acid, then rinsed twice—with water and potassium cyanide—and sealed with a coat of varnish. To make prints from the negatives, she floated sheets of fine writing paper in a solution of egg whites, left them to dry, then soaked the albumen-coated paper in the silver nitrate. Negative and paper were exposed to daylight; then she fixed the fresh print with hypo and washed off the fixative with buckets of well water. The color of the image was adjusted with a sequence of toners, some of them toxic. Most of these operations were performed more or less blindly, in darkness. The chemicals stank; the collodion streaked and peeled; dust on the plate left white blotches; the hypo turned her prints green; the silver nitrate reddened the albumen; the lethal cyanide blackened her clothes, table linens, and

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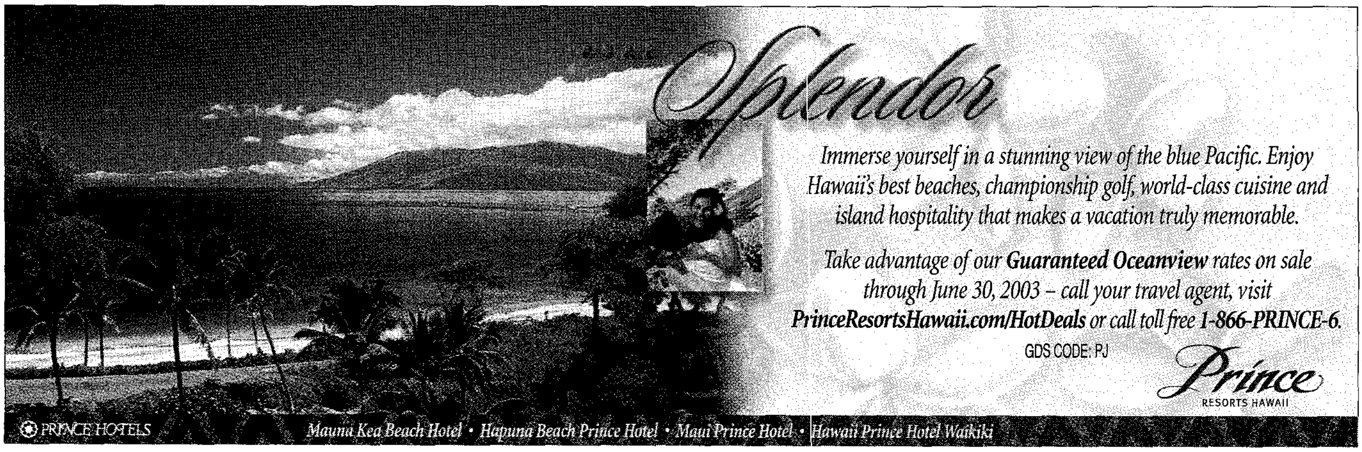

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*Mauna Kea Beach Hotel • Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel • Maui Prince Hotel • Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki* skin, and rightly terrified her—it was probably responsible for the chronic breathing problems that she, like so many nineteenth-century photographers, suffered as the years passed. She wrote to Herschel frequently for technical advice and moral support in that experimental period ("Pray! Pray!" he replied. "Be more cautious!"), and she "felt [her] way literally in the dark thro' endless failures."

But Cameron, as Cox notes, worked by "embracing accidents." The short focal length and fixed aperture of her first lens produced an image that was sharp only at a small "sweet spot" at the center, and she adopted what she called "the fluke" of her first out-of-focus portraits as a hallmark of her style. Even when she mastered the physics and geometry of taking an impeccable image, she preferred suggestion to definition. Before almost anyone else, she grasped the power of photography to iconify a face, to mythologize a name, to propagate a desire—and that intuition is at the heart of her modernity.

Every canonical figure on a ten-greatest list is, however deserving, the chance beneficiary of a capricious riptide that disperses some bodies of work, smashes others or pulls them under the waves, and sweeps a handful, intact, to the shore of the next century. As Cox points out, Cameron's innovations are deeply indebted to the portraiture of David Wilkie Wynfield, a painter who, in the early eighteen-sixties, published an album of "fancy" photographic portraits: closeups in soft focus that portrayed his friends costumed as literary or historical characters. Wynfield and Cameron corresponded, and he apparently gave her at least one lesson in the use of a camera. "To my feelings about his beautiful photography," she wrote, "I owed *all* my attempts and indeed consequently all my successes." She was perhaps even more indebted to the tutelage of her friend and model George Watts, "an artistic missionary," Cox writes, whose "classical treatment of the human form separated him from the prevailing fashion for verisimilitude so favored by the early Pre-Raphaelites." Although Watts was primarily a painter of allegorical scenes, he made his living as a celebrity portraitist, specializing, as Cameron would, in eminent Victorians. He achieved a kind of immortality by association, in part with her. And, as the Ellen Terry fiasco suggests, he was himself eminently Victorian: a man who invoked the highest of principles to justify the baser of self-delusions.

Yet Watts also sensed precisely where Cameron's weakness lay: in complacence. For someone both bold and worldly, she was remarkably provincial. There is a beauty in the low, the strange, the corrupt, and the commonplace that she never saw, and a nobility in ugliness—the face of George Eliot is a good example. Cameron jubilated equally over good pictures and bad. "You must not be satisfied," Watts exhorted her. "There is more to be done."

But I wonder if that streak of complacence in an otherwise conscientious nature doesn't explain Cameron's mysterious buoyancy. She never paid attention to her critics, even those she respected, like Ruskin, whose dismissals might have sunk her. She wasn't a woman given to regret. So, in 1875, when her husband—who had always supported her art "with enthusiastic applause" and tolerated the mess it made with "sympathy" and "indulgence"—decided, at the age of eighty-one, that he wanted to spend his last years in Ceylon, she packed in her English life at the peak of her career and they sailed off with their coffins. Charles's health improved in the tropical climate, and he died in 1880, having outlived his wife by a year. She did a few fine portraits of her Tamil farmworkers, and the only extant portrait of a fellow woman artist at work, the botanical painter Marianne North, who left a last impression of Cameron: "The walls of the room were covered with magnificent photographs; others were tumbling about the tables, chairs, and floors with quantities of damp books, all untidy and picturesque; the lady herself with a lace veil on her head and flowing draperies. . . . She also made some studies of natives while I was there, and took such a fancy to the back of one of them (which she said was absolutely superb) that she insisted on her son retaining him as her gardener, though she had no garden and he did not know even the meaning of the word."

"Portraits," Carlyle wrote, "are the candle by which we read history." Cameron, in that sense, is a votive artist. But the builders of great pantheons seldom get to rest in them. She was an exception. ♦

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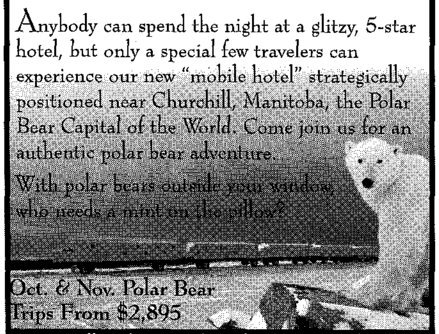

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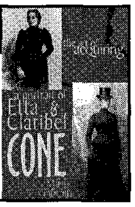

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# BRIEFLY NOTED

Forever, *by Pete Hamill (Little, Brown; $25.95).* If September 11th was a terrible warning of New York's mortality, Hamill's entertaining panhistorical fantasy is a paean to its immortality. In 1740, an Irish Jew named Cormac O'Connor heads to New York in pursuit of the man who killed his father and gets tangled up in a rebellion against the English. Through a series of events involving an African slave with shamanistic powers, he is granted eternal life, provided that he never leaves Manhattan. There follows a tour of the city's history through Cormac's eyes: the political corruption and the poverty, but also the majestic growth of the metropolis through its culture, its buildings, and its people. The book's central conceit could almost have come from the pages of Twain or Bellamy, but Hamill pulls his story fiercely into the present by centering the final phase of Cormac's narrative on the World Trade Center attacks themselves.

The Commissariat of Enlightenment, *by Ken Kalfus (Ecco; $24.95).* For Comrade Astapov of the Agitprop Section of the Commissariat of Enlightenment, the filmmaker protagonist of this début novel, "life's struggle was not to control events, but the way in which they were remembered." His story begins in 1910, at the press-besieged deathbed of Tolstoy, where his talent for manipulating film to falsify events earns the notice of Stalin. Astapov's distortions are the perfect metaphor for Kalfus's own special effects: Stalin, of course, wasn't there when Tolstoy died. Preoccupied with truth, media, history, and politics, this novel shows its mechanisms proudly. Its stunning conclusion is a postmortem voice-over from the embalmed mind of Lenin, who, still conscious, is able to survey Russia's future, and is eternally irritated by the abuses of his successor.

The Devil That Danced on the Water, *by Aminatta Forna (Atlantic Monthly; $25).* In 1975, Mohamed Forna, a doctor and leading Sierra Leonean dissident, was executed for treason. A quarter century later, his daughter, who was ten when he was arrested, began to investigate his death. Her lucid, exacting memoir recounts indelible scenes: in bed with malaria, she watches a soldier ransack her room; when her stepmother goes to plead for her father's life, Aminatta asks her to get the President's autograph. She interviews the men who gave false testimony against her father, and discerns in their matter-of-fact responses a "lack of expectation" that defines life in Sierra Leone after decades of violence. In a telling episode, her stepmother takes pity on one of these witnesses, who is now destitute, and hires him as a cook. The author wonders if it is in this way, "together under the same roof," that she and her countrymen must learn to live with the past.

Emanuel Feuermann, *by Annette Morreau (Yale; $39.95).* Although Pablo Casals remains the popular ideal of a cellist, cellists themselves tend to prefer the more obscure Emanuel Feuermann, who was born a century ago, in Jewish Galicia, and died in 1942, at the age of thirty-nine. One of the greatest musical prodigies of the twentieth century—he was made a conservatory professor at sixteen—Feuermann had a flawless technique and all but created the modern cello sound. Morreau's exemplary biography reveals a personality in which artistry, careerism, and naïveté crowded out any glimmer of self-doubt. "Difficulties do not exist for Mr. Feuermann," a critic said of one performance, and these words apply equally well to the cellist's boundless energy and confidence. Having moved to America to escape the Nazis, Feuermann was on the verge of stardom when he died. Photographs here show him slouching against his Buick, advertising Chesterfields, and performing in front of the Stars and Stripes—a tantalizing glimpse of the household name that might have been.

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### DANCING

# EARLY SPRING

*The Martha Graham Dance Company returns to New York.*

### BY JOAN ACOCELLA

The Martha Graham Dance Company, which recently completed a two-week season at the Joyce Theatre, looks as though it's just been let out of jail. As has been widely reported, Graham, when she died in 1991, willed all her property—presumably including her repertory—to Ron Protas, a younger man (forty-odd years her junior) who had been her closest companion in her later years. With this legacy, and without any formal training in dance or in administration, Protas became the artistic director of her troupe. There followed a decade of mounting misery, which culminated, in 2001, in a lawsuit. Finally, last summer, a federal district court ruled that most of Graham's extant dances were not hers to will to anyone: some of them she had legally assigned to the company years before, while the majority of the others belonged to the troupe as "work-for-hire." This decision, which Protas is reportedly appealing, no doubt accounts for the exhilarated manner the Graham dancers showed at the Joyce.

But, in fact, this famous troupe, the oldest dance company in America, had been in trouble long before Protas took over. Graham, who was born in 1894, choreographed for sixty-five years, but she was in top form for only the first half of that run. In the nineteen-fifties, after the breakup of her marriage to the choreographer Erick Hawkins—and as she began contemplating the end of her performing career (she was a complete stage animal, and only choreographed, she said, in order to have something to dance)—she slipped into despair and alcoholism. Eventually, she stopped going to the studio. The dancers ran the company. Later she dried out, and came back, but on the arm of Protas, whom many of the dancers and staff found impossible to work with. Some quit; others were fired. Year by year, the company consisted of increasingly young people facing, without the old-timers' guidance, increasingly serious problems: debt, dissension, cold reviews, defecting funders.

Graham was, in large measure, the founder of modern dance, and also, to many, its greatest practitioner, the author of a form of theatre that, for the first time, brought American dance in line with modernism. Her dancers felt they had to defend her high standing. But it wasn't just her reputation that was so exalted. Her work drew on Jung, on Greek mythology, on Rilke and Dante. It was grandiose, soul-delving, aimed,

*Miki Orihara and Tadej Brdnik in Graham's 1944 "Appalachian Spring." Photograph by Jason Schmidt.*

as she said, at illuminating "the interior landscape." It was of a time, and a tone, with Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner, D. H. Lawrence. In her heyday, Graham had an audience sympathetic to that ambition. But her later dancers operated in a period dominated by irony, a period when a drama involving characters identified as One Who Seeks and He Who Summons, wandering among phallic statuary and brandishing icons at each other, was likely to inspire laughter rather than awe. What could the dancers do? They did what most of us would do: they pushed it. They grimaced, they gnashed their teeth, they shivered from head to toe. The result looked less like dance than like a cry for help.

Now help has come, thanks to the court, and already the company looks different. In its last New York season, in 1999, it had sixteen dancers; this year it has twenty-four, and leading roles are going to young people. In Protas's place, there is now a four-person directorate. Terese Capucilli and Christine Dakin, the two dancers who, more than anyone else, kept the organization going during the Protas years, are the artistic directors of the performing wing. Kenneth Topping, another veteran, is the head of the school. Janet Eilber, a Graham star from the seventies, is the director of Martha Graham Resources, which means, above all, that she will oversee the licensing of the work to other companies. The company has big plans.

And, miraculously, at the Joyce, it was performing Graham again, rather than an anguished defense of her. Gone were the Kabuki faces, the nervous breakdowns. In "Appalachian Spring" (1944), which is about the marriage of a pioneer couple, Miki Orihara and Tadej Brdnik weren't telling us, "This is Martha Graham's great treatment of the myth of the American frontier" (which it is), or "This is the loveliest piece she ever made" (ditto). They were just performing their roles, and so a whole new level of detail came to the fore. For the first time, I noticed that, confronted with the preacher's warnings of sin (by which he means sex), the bride and groom keep reprising a jaunty little dance, probably something they did at the hoedown where they first fell in love. They didn't gaze at each other moistly or jut their chins at the preacher defiantly. They just did their do-si-do, which, all by itself, said, "Here there can be no sin."

But everything was more like dance—that is, wholly concrete and wholly abstract, communicating by suggestion. In the past few decades, "Errand Into the Maze," Graham's 1947 take on Ariadne and the Minotaur, was frankly a tale about a woman conquering her fear of sex. You took it, or didn't, on those terms, and after the sixties, needless to say, many people didn't take it. Graham experts objected that this was too narrow a view—that "Errand," like so much of Graham's work, was about fear itself, not necessarily sexual fear. The way the piece was performed in those days, however, with the Minotaur waving his bony staff at the heroine and with her making help-I'm-being-chased-by-a-rapist faces, it was hard to discern a more general signification. At the Joyce, with the dancers—above all, Martin Lofsnes and the superb Fang-Yi Sheu—newly impassive, you finally got the point, and "Errand" ceased to be corny. To see this change taking place under the artistic direction of Capucilli and Dakin, two of the "faciest" dancers of Graham's late years, is very moving.

Part of what made the dances more dancelike this season was the music. Graham is known as the least musical of all the great choreographers—the least likely to structure the choreography according to the score, or even to have her dancers move to a beat. Her late career bears that out. In her early years, however, she cared about music. For a long time now, the Graham company, like so many other modern-dance troupes, has been performing to taped music, because, at union scale, it couldn't afford live musicians. But this season, despite its debts, it managed to bankroll a nineteen-member ensemble for the first week. What a difference this made! And not just to the ears but to the eyes. Dancers perform differently—about twice as interestingly—to live music. (In the second week, when the company reverted to tape, half the show seemed to have been taken away.) It has been rather exhausting, in the past few decades, to be lectured on the meaning of life by Martha Graham, or by her latter-day dancers. To see the company hopping to the beat, even in the big, "tragic" pieces, was to understand that she was a choreographer rather than (or as well as) an oracle.

Not everything has been repaired. Some of the dancers—even some of the best ones, such as Orihara and Christophe Jeannot—are still making faces. And there are larger issues. The sexual luridness of Graham's work was a mid-career development, one that accompanied her grief over aging. In the seventies, when Halston became her costume designer, this theme rose to a screaming pitch. It should be quieted. It already has been, a little bit. I saw that Gary Galbraith, when he played the Minotaur, was provided with a pair of shorts that covered his bottom. A similar garment should be given to Martin Lofsnes.

Then there is the question of the repertory. Some of Graham's later pieces should now be laid aside. (Again, this process seems to be under way. Of the fifteen works presented at the Joyce, only one was later than 1962. Graham choreographed until 1991.) We could lose a few of the earlier pieces, too—for example, "Dark Meadow," the one with he-who-this and she-who-that. Of the part where One Who Seeks squirms around inside a black cloth, Graham's biographer Don McDonagh has written that this is "a strong meditative solo," where our heroine seems "to exorcise something from the past." That may have been true once, but today this passage looks as though somebody dropped a blanket over the dog.

The Graham company is now heading down an unmapped road. We don't yet know whether modern-dance companies, which, unlike ballet companies, have no internationally practiced language but are mounted on the personal technique of their founding choreographers, can survive the death of those founders. To do so, they have to win young people to the technique, and then they must somehow add new repertory without diluting the founder's work. Few troupes have attempted this. The Alvin Ailey company is one; the José Limón company, another. They are doing O.K. With the Graham enterprise, more is at stake, because the repertory is larger and finer. After the Joyce season, one wishes the company all the luck in the world. ♦

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## THE CURRENT CINEMA

# MEN'S WORLDS

*"Dark Blue" and "All the Real Girls."*

### BY ANTHONY LANE

Unless I'm missing something, the latest Ron Shelton picture, "Dark Blue," appears to have absolutely nothing to do with sports. What's going on here? This is the gentleman who is best known for "Bull Durham," "White Men Can't Jump," "Cobb," and "Tin Cup," which challenged the global audience with a daring combination of Kevin Costner and golf. That still leaves many sports that have yet to get the Shelton treatment, and I was looking forward to a tale of limpid love from the dewy world of the N.F.L., or, at the other extreme, a brutish exposé of the hell that is interstate croquet. Instead, we get "Dark Blue," which starts with footage of the Rodney King assault in 1991, and ends a year later with looting and riots.

Caught in the eye of the storm is Eldon Perry (Kurt Russell), a veteran of the Special Investigations Squad of the L.A.P.D., although you wonder whether he, like others of his thunderous kind on the force, caused the storm to roll in the first place. Perry may not be primarily a racist, but racism is certainly second nature to him, the disdain seeping from him like sweat. As he points out, he couldn't care less if his young partner, Bobby Keough (Scott Speedman), is "dating a sister," but the cops' first concern is to keep the streets clean, and if that means treating black Angelenos like dirt, so be it. The film proposes that Bobby is already infected with the older man's toxic attitude—with passive prejudice, as it were, the sort that you inhale like smoke. This would make perfect sense were it not for the demeanor of Scott Speedman, who looks so angelic that it's hard to imagine him catching anything worse than a dose of chicken pox.

Moving up the ladder, we come to Jack Van Meter (Brendan Gleeson), Perry's boss, who has the suet face of a drinker and a bad case of missing morals. He is heavily on the take, using snitches to do his dirty work, and if you place him next to Assistant Chief Holland (Ving Rhames), the comparison makes you wince. On the one hand, a brawny Irish bigot; on the other, a senior black officer so intent on purifying the force that he even preaches his mission to applauding worshippers in church. Dramatically, this is too lumpen to be of much use, and not until the final minutes are we released from the finger-wagging ethic that Shelton and his screenwriter, David Ayer, apply to the entire picture: white men can't tell the truth.

All of which is a disappointment, because this picture has so much going for it. For one thing, it began life as a short story by James Ellroy. In 1997, when Ellroy was transferred to cinema screens, we got "L.A. Confidential," which looks more driven than ever, and which shares many of the concerns that ignite "Dark Blue." Bobby Keough is as daunted by the example of his father, a career cop, as the Guy Pearce character was in the earlier film, and Jack Van Meter is a clear, if pudgy, update on Dudley Smith, the bent boss who was played with such steel-tipped benevolence by James Cromwell. Not until Smith pulled a gun and shot one of his own men, however, was his villainy unmasked (and, to those watching, it was like a kick in the shins), whereas Van Meter reveals his rottenness in the first reel. In short, "Dark Blue" suffers from a problem that, however niggling, is likely to hobble any thriller: no thrills.

We sense this shortfall, I think, in the

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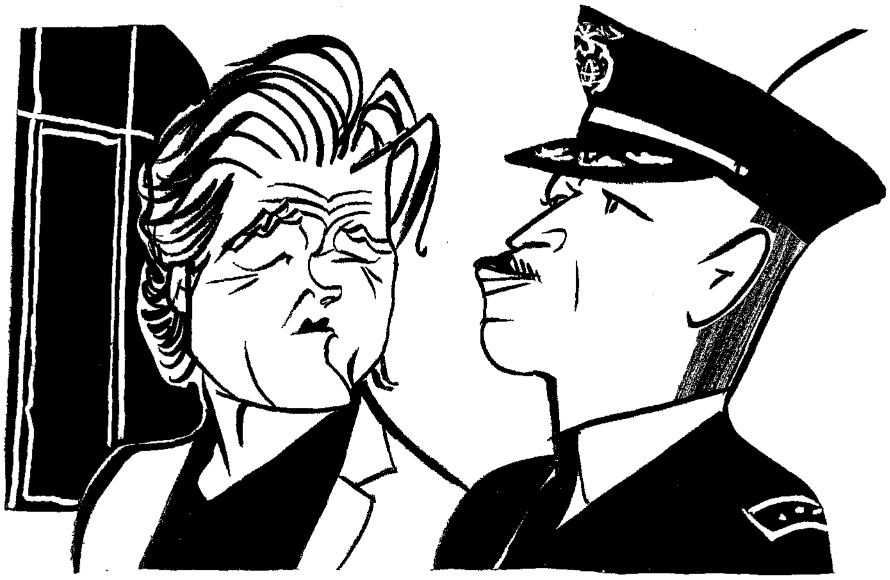
earliest scenes, as Eldon Perry stands close to tears in the lovely environs of a motel room. Kurt Russell has let himself go, for this picture, in some style—his handsomeness spreading into gluey middle age, those thin eyes sunken and dulled. Gone is the mean, punky rigor that sustained him in his great days with John Carpenter and allowed him, when playing Snake Plissken in "Escape from New York," to become the first leading man since John Wayne to wear an eye patch without looking like a dork. You could claim that, when Russell took on that oily pink alien in "The Thing," he was merely in training for his battles with Brendan Gleeson in "Dark Blue," but the main change is that Perry's most consuming battle is with himself. Sensitive audiences may lament Hollywood's addiction to action movies, as if action were now the only thing on view; more troubling, though, is what happens when the action has to stop. In "L.A. Confidential," the characters' feelings bounced and barrelled along in the slipstream of the plot; in "Dark Blue," the poor plot has to wait, hanging fire, while the characters clock in for psychological duty. It should be called "L.A. Confessional."

Everything comes to a boil when Perry, who has been upped to the rank of lieutenant, uses the promotion ceremony to set loose his demons and lash the system that bred them. (He is roundly rebuked for grandstanding by Van Meter, who, you must admit, has a point.) Much more gripping are the scenes through which Perry has to drive in order to make that speech: a dusty meltdown of South Central, just after the announcement of the Rodney King verdict, as the citizens eviscerate their own town. Shelton pitches the tone just right, filling the screen not with organized mobs but with knots of people, stragglers fastening on anything and anybody against which to vent their wrath. So charged were those few days, and so inherently dramatic were the convulsions of political disquiet, that it seems crazy—almost a dereliction of duty—for filmmakers to have ignored them, and all credit to Ron Shelton for wanting to dive back into the fray. But I wish that the director had swerved aside from the police (who were, after all, only half of the equation) and investigated the lives and grievances of those who were finally tempted into rampage. As it is, we see them wandering like aimless ghosts, unnamed and unappeased, bearing their booty—a violin, a television, sacks of food. One guy even hauls a set of stolen golf clubs. At last, the Shelton touch.

The hero of "All the Real Girls" is Paul (Paul Schneider), who at the age of twenty-two has already cut a swath through his home town in North Carolina. Paul has apparently slept with twenty-six women. What, you may ask, is his secret? Is it the chunky, radish-red car that he borrows from his mom (Patricia Clarkson), and that is reputed to run faster if you put mothballs in the tank? Could it be the flourish with which he orders in restaurants ("I want something greasy")? It cannot be his artistry in bed; when we finally catch him in action, the expression on the face of the girl underneath him suggests that she would rather be doing something truly arousing, like brushing her teeth.

The lucky girl is Noel (Zooey Deschanel), the sister of Paul's friend Tip (Shea Whigham). For the first time in his life, Paul has fallen solidly in love, only to be concussed by the news that Noel has slept with someone else. The director, David Gordon Green, who cowrote the screenplay with his leading man, presents this as a profound change of course in Paul's small-hearted existence, from which we all have much to learn. From another point of view, what we see is a disloyal dickhead getting a taste of his own medicine. "I wish I could read your mind," Noel says to him, not realizing that it would take about as long to read as the side of a pencil.

There is, of course, an honorable tradition of the inarticulate man lunging at emotions that he does not comprehend. As you watch Paul punctuate the simple phrase "I care about you" with a cadenza of nervous coughs, or listen to the baroque belching and spitting of his comrades, you realize that they are meant to be third-generation Stanley Kowalskis, and the film does reproduce the odd blending of the coarse and the lyrical that hung around Brando and all his works. (Noel: "In the wintertime, I like the sound of water." Paul: "It makes me pee.") Sadly, the men here come across as whiny and infantile, and Green is dangerously keen to stress their retardation, allowing Tip to reveal that he still sucks his thumb and wets the bed. No wonder the women are so exasperated—why doesn't Noel just scrape the guys from her shoes and move on? Zooey Deschanel is by far the best thing in the movie, switching at will between the plain and the radiant. The camera can't decide which it loves more, the folds of the Carolina hills or closeups of Noel's face, and the narrative climax comes when, without warning, she decides to get a new haircut. If you just can't stomach that level of excitement in a movie, I quite understand. ♦


*Kurt Russell and Ving Rhames in a cop story set during the Los Angeles riots.*

TOM BACHTELL

### THE BACK PAGE BY ROGER ANGELL

# THE CLICHÉ EXPERT IN RECOVERY

(*Mr. Chip Arbuthnot, the cliché expert, enters the courtroom slowly and takes his place in the witness box. He is wearing a neck brace.*)

Q: Mr. Arbuthnot! You look terrible!

A: Ow!

Q: I'm so sorry. Have you been in an accident?

A: Negative. I just overdid it.

Q: A party?

A: More stress-related.

Q: But you've seen a doctor, I see.

A: I went to my man.

Q: And he—

A: Sent me to his man—his go-to guy.

Q: Yes, of course. But your neck?

A: He took some tests.

Q: And then?

A: He tweaked them.

Q: Ah, yes!

A: We had a defining moment. I'd had more than a man could bear.

Q: I'm sorry—more what?

A: Why, more heads-ups, of course. Everyone was giving them to me, on a daily basis. Dozens of them, 24/7. "I'm sending you a heads-up." "Just wanted to give you a little heads-up . . ." From my department head. From my wife, from my dog-walker. The latte lady. No wonder my neck gave way. That and the rest.

Q: There's more?

A: Damn right. What about taking no prisoners?

Q: O.K. Is there anything else?

A: Sure, there's more. What about the shooting?

Q: Shooting?

A: Well, *not* shooting, technically. Not shooting the messenger.

Q: Strenuous stuff. Also raising the bar, perhaps?

A: There's no end to that. And what about telephone tag? At my age!

Q: Plus thinking—thinking—uh, it's on the tip of my tongue.

A: Thinking outside the box.

Q: Thank you! That'll take it out of a cliché expert, for sure.

A: And all that boat floating.

Q: Boat floating?

A: Whatever floats your boat.

Q: But of course.

A: And don't forget the learning curve. That took a while to master, believe you me.

Q: Wow! No wonder you're all beat up. But I think—

A: Hold it right there.

Q: Huh?

A: You don't think, you have a—

Q: I have a—got it! I have a perception.

A: Bravo. And your perception is?

Q: My perception is that we've been getting our ducks in a row here.

A: If you will. Quote unquote.

Q: Mr. Arbuthnot, I have to say it. You're still in top form here, despite all. And these haven't been easy times for a cliché expert, have they?

A: No, the market has been terrible.

Q: You've lost a lot?

A: Yes. The good days are gone. What fools we were. We were in cliché heaven, and then, almost overnight—just think about it. "Slippery slope" has bottomed out. "Arguably" is worth pennies today. "With all the bells and whistles" is a dead guppy. "No-brainer," "My plate is full," "written in stone," "I.I.R.S."—these were blue chips just last year. All gone-zo. My portfolio is tapped.

Q: It's shocking. But what's "I.I.R.S."—something to do with taxes? I know I should know, but—

A: "It isn't rocket science."

Q: Yes, of course. I'm sorry.

A: Don't feel bad—I'm comfortable with us. This has been good face time.

Q: Really!

A: Yes, you resonate with me.

Q: Why, Mr. Arbuthnot! You flatter me.

A: Yep. You're a regular hottie.

Q: Zowie! Damn, man!

A: No, you da man!

Q: I am?

A: You my rap star! You mah Anto-wayne! You mah—

Q: Mr. Arbuthnot! Contain yourself! We are not a gangsta. This is a courtroom, not a dog-and-pony show.

A (*crestfallen*): Yes, you're right, of course. It's just that it's such fertile ground.

Q: *Entendu*. But now what's happening, Mr. Arbuthnot? You've grown extremely pale.

A: Uh-oh. And you, too. I can see the whole courtroom here—it's like I'm looking through you.

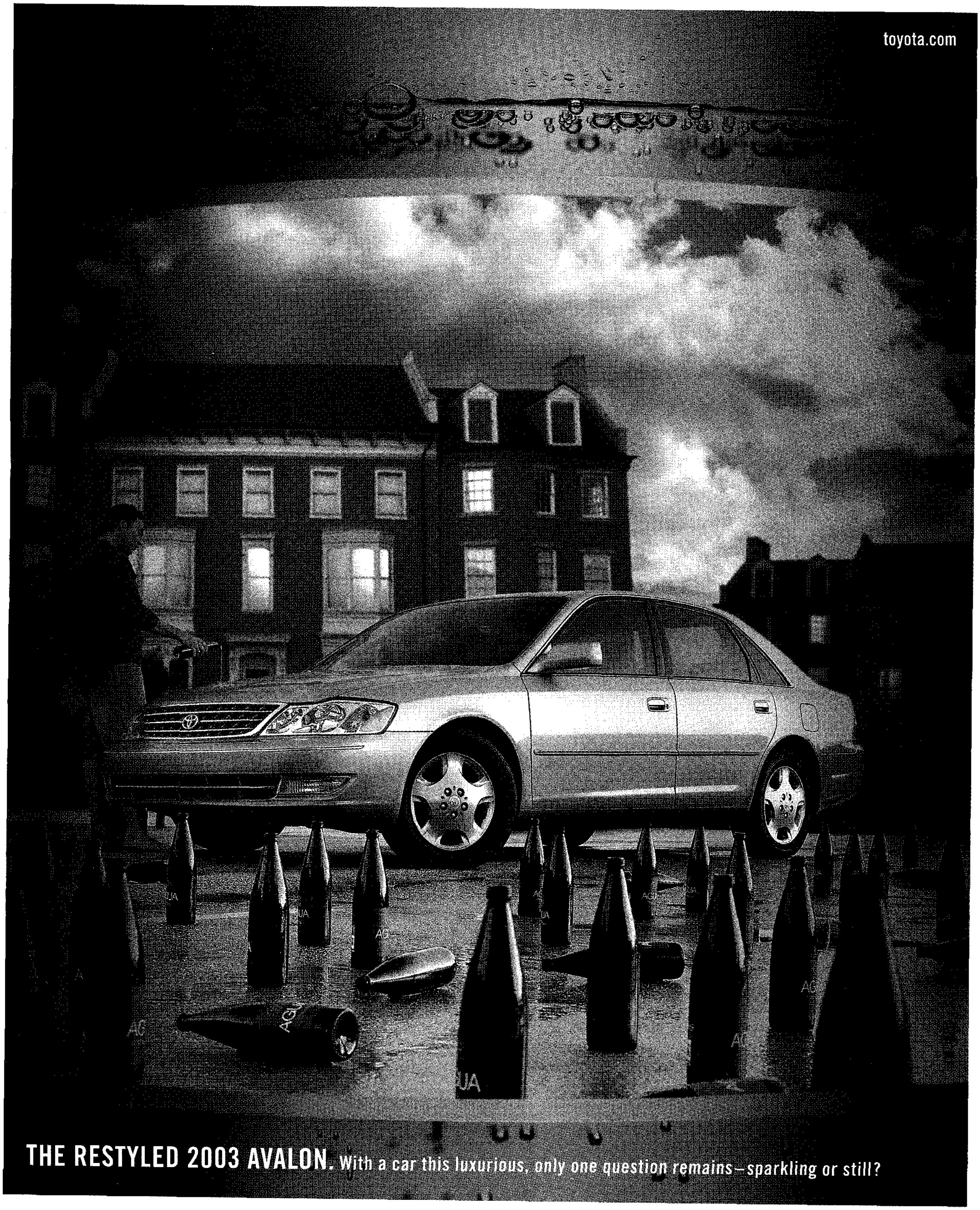
Q: And I can see your spine, right behind your tasteful Ferragamo.

A: Can it be? Yes, it is!

TOGETHER: We've achieved transparency!

(*They evanesce, in perfect synergy.*) ◆

LAURIE ROSENWALD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